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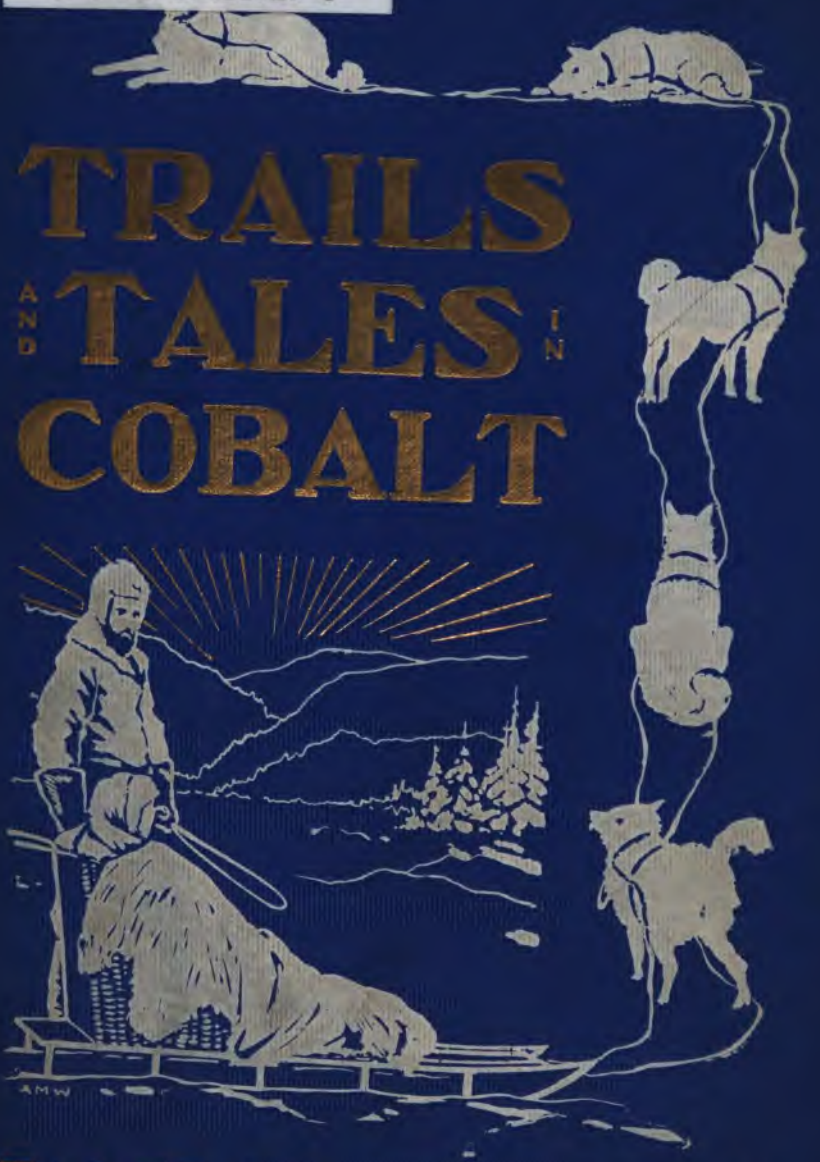
TRAILS AND TALES IN COBALT



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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

"There she stood balancing herself with her pole and keeping the boat's head straight."

—p. 77.

... AND TALES
...N COBALT

BY
W. H. P. JARVIS

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1908

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Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year One thousand nine hundred and eight, by WILLIAM H. P. JARVIS, at the Department of Agriculture.

I dedicate this book
to the
Western Prospector
in whose society
I have spent so many happy days
in
"the good old West."

PREFACE

LET not the reader think that these stories, which I have tried to tell in truth of color, are all fiction; in fact, they are, many of them, true, while the thread that binds the tales, namely, the story of the prospecting trip in Cobalt, is true almost to the point of being history.

As for the tales which tell of mining, they are written with the greatest fidelity the writer can command; and the fact that he was in Rossland at the time of the ever-memorable War Eagle slump, which ruined so many fortunes in Eastern Canada, and also has spent five years in the mining camps of Alaska and the Yukon, prospecting and mining, will assure the reader as to the local color being genuine.

While the writer has tried to make his little work an exposé of mining promoters' methods, and has sought to tell the "dear old public" how they are robbed, he does not wish to be thought to say that the honestly promoted mining company does not exist, but how are the widow and the orphan to discriminate when the highest art in newspaper advertising is employed to bring about their entrapment?

One thing, perhaps, has been omitted, and that is a compliment justly due Premier Whitney for the

honesty of the administration of Cobalt camp by his Government, and the integrity of his officers in the field; but this has been apparent to all.

Popular prejudice ever has pictured the Western prospector of a certain type, and the majority of writers have pandered to this prejudice. The writer has attempted to present a true picture, notwithstanding the maxim of the great Barnum, who said "the public likes to be fooled."

W. H. P. J.

OTTAWA, March, 1908.

TRAILS AND TALES IN COBALT

I.

WHEN I first met "Pard" he was on ground belonging to the Nipissing Mining Company, on the trail between Cross Lake and Cobalt Station. The fact that he was on this company's property and in this locality bespoke him a stranger, for the ground in the vicinity had all been staked. Evidently he had just arrived in camp and was establishing himself that he might "get located."

That he was a stranger was endorsed by the new tin pail which flashed back the sunlight in silvery splendor from the bundle of blankets which, with a tent, constituted the pack, engirthed by a pack-strap and lying where it had been flung on the ground. To this bundle there was a frying-pan attached, also new. With a small axe, such as prospectors use, he was clearing away the underbrush. There was nothing in his dress to denote the veteran, save that the hat he had was a well-worn Stetson, such as the tenderfoot is wont to affect, and the prospector and plainsman of the West ever chooses because it suits

him best. The man's movements were deliberate, but he never wasted an effort.

I was hot from my climb from the shores of Cross Lake, and I was generally tired. I sat down upon a log and began to size up the stranger, and made the summing-up above recorded. He never paid me the slightest attention, as is the code of his "brethren."

"Making camp?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, without lifting his eyes.

"Trying to get located, I suppose, before you go and see if you can strike anything?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Ever do any prospecting before?" I asked.

He lifted his eyes until they rested on me, just for a second or two; then his face was again hid behind the broad rim of his hat, and after the lapse of several more seconds he replied:

"Yes, but not in this country. The last place I prospected in was the Fort Steele country, looking for copper or lead. Been East visiting my folks, and thought I would like to come up here and see what was doing. I suppose the country is staked from 'hell to breakfast'?"

"Yes," I said, "pretty near, but you can't chase these fellows out of Cobalt. They walk out every morning with a tomahawk and carrying a lunch, and expect to *find* a mine."

I then told him of general conditions, and that I thought the most likely place of striking anything would be either to the north-west or the south-east of

the main area, also that I had been away to the east that day in Lorrain township, and that there were very few prospecting in that district, and that I thought it held possibilities as great as any. I finally ventured the suggestion that he and I join forces and work as "partners" so far as camping and living together went.

I knew the class to which he belonged, and I liked his fellows. Schooled to generosity by the hardships of the mountain trails and the dangers of a frontier life, these men never seek to give their companions the greater burden on the trail, nor take to themselves the larger portion when the grub-pile runs low.

"Good-bye, Pard," I said, as I left him, with his promise to think things over while he got acquainted; "I'll see you on Monday."

I continued my journey to Cobalt, feeling pleased that I had fallen in with a partner who was an experienced prospector. I could not guess that my new acquaintance—I did not yet know his name, but such knowledge was not necessary to an acquaintance between Western men—was one of the most celebrated trappers and hunters in the Kootenays, and likewise a raconteur of adventures such as the writer of short stories dearly loves to know. Of this I was ignorant, but what I had gained was sufficient to inspire new hope. Indeed, a change in method was necessary, for trying to prospect with Cobalt Station as a base was a poor business.

With these thoughts I had come to the collection of tents and shacks which has since given place to

the town of Cobalt. Eminently the place gave evidence of rush and excitement, and an atmosphere of a haste for wealth pervaded. It was not essentially different from towns set down in like conditions through like circumstances in the West, wherever Nature is overcome and yields a secret to the insatiate void in humankind. Here a rough board shack bears the sign "Cobalt Bloom and Soft Drinks." "Cobalt Bloom" is the nearest approach to spirituous liquors openly sold in Cobalt. The product is not standardized, and public speculation is wild as to what constitutes its "dope."

Surrounded by stumps, sticks, and stones, a tent, advertised by a big sign as the "Canadian Bank of Commerce," stands on the hill just back of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway station. Facing it is a grocery store of rough lumber, and the camp stretches away in tents, log cabins, and rough board shacks, in the acme of disorder scattered over a topography rough and broken, asserting their existence in the face of endless stumps, logs, stones, and general rubbish.

The camp was engaged in cooking its evening meal, and the open fire or the little tin stove set outside the tent was the orthodox means. The frequent laughter, the coarse exclamations, and the loud oaths spoke of the restraints of civilization being absent. The gaiety was that of hearts without a care, the stimulation of the glory of autumnal air and weather, the reflection of the colorings of the forest on the surrounding hills.

II.

BEING a newcomer in camp and as yet unestablished with associates, I was suffered to take temporary possession of a small "A" tent lying across the trail from the Bank of Commerce and adjoining that of the "Sourdough Quartette." In fact, the tent was under the patronage of these gentlemen, and an old acquaintance with "Dick," the most convivial spirit of the whole, won me the favor. As Dick was the life of his party, so that party was the life of all Cobalt. "Them Klondike fellows do drink a lot of booze, an' they do raise a row o' nights," was the remark of one of Cobalt's citizens.

Dick was a winner; he had a laugh that had won him a place in the hearts of many men and more women years ago. In fact, the number of daintily colored and sweetly perfumed letters that had come to Dick's address for years after his advent to Dawson was there a subject of remark among his fellows, notwithstanding that the atmosphere of the Klondike capital was conducive of nothing so much as making people interest themselves only in such matters as concerned themselves.

Dick had been rated a millionaire in Dawson once, and many were the congratulations he received as such. He and two others had become possessed of a claim in one of the Klondike creeks. The three

friends had taken another "partner," who was to be the practical man, and who, in due course, began to work the property. Soon after operations were commenced the bed-rock began to yield big pay. A porphyry dike was found running across the creek, constituting the best kind of bed-rock. Six feet of this bed-rock would yield ten dollars to the pan, and so it was a simple matter to calculate half a dozen millions within the boundaries of the claim.

The sequel—alas! it is always such. The news was heard in Dawson one day that the operating head of the lucky group had disposed of his holdings. Then there came to be less said about the great Bonanza claim, and, finally, with returning summer, the results were attained. After running expenses were paid and mortgages disposed of, Dick and his friends had nothing, but the chap who sold had got a handsome profit in hard cash.

The intrinsic head of the "Sourdough Quartette" was the Colonel. The Colonel owned the tent, the blankets, the stove, and the dishes. He likewise owned the major portion of the grub. The Colonel's hospitality was excessive. "Any d—— man could have any d—— thing he wants in the lay-out," was the ever-recurring remark of the host. "Have a drink and a cigar," was his invitation to me on being introduced.

The Colonel had a history. At the time when the Nome diggings had been discovered, and the socially putrid, fretting under the restraint of the authorities in Dawson, had left that city by all or any means for the new camp in "God's country," the Colonel

had joined the rush. His abilities and accomplishments soon won him a place, and he was taken into the civic government of Nome as treasurer. This constituted a graft of great potentiality, and the Colonel prospered.

"Whenever I would get cleaned out playing the wheel or 'Bank,' I'd just go up to the City Hall and open the safe, and take what I wanted to keep going," was the Colonel's description of the happy circumstances under which he thrived in the halcyon days when chaos reigned over society in that great Mecca of avaricious and adventurous souls.

From Alaska the Colonel had visited Nevada, and then drifted to Cobalt. "Never carry a gun unless you carry it loaded, and never draw unless you intend to shoot, and never shoot unless you shoot to kill, for then your side tells the story." This was the Colonel's maxim, and it is eminently strong.

The third in the party of Klondikers was Teddy. Teddy was of manner soft and unassertive. Teddy had seen Dawson when wine cost $15.00 per bottle and flowed like water; when the camp currency was counted in ounces of gold dust, pennyweights, and grains; when the dance halls were in the height of their glory and crowded nightly with a populace astounding in its complexity. But Teddy never spoke to the multitude, and seldom to an individual. He only smiled.

The fourth of the "Sourdough Quartette" was the "Cap." The "Cap" was not properly a sourdough; he had never seen the Yukon's mighty flood heave its winter's ice to the sea. In fact, he had never been

in the Yukon at all, but had been in South Africa. He had seen things, and the same liberal courtesy that breeds the proverbial Kentucky colonel had embraced the "Cap" to his three companions to make the four. The "Cap" was a mining engineer, at least, if not in fact, by courtesy.

"This camp upsets all previous theories of mining. What do I know about these ores and where to find them?" No person could answer the question, so the Captain's deprecation of self was allowed to pass, but not without duly impressing such members of the common herd unto whose ears it reached.

Conviviality was the characteristic of the "Sourdough Quartette," and to the aid of this spirit was called an abundance of whiskey. Several satellites were at hand who constituted ready messengers to Haileybury. Whiskey was purchased by the half-dozen bottles in Haileybury and carried to the "Sourdoughs" in Cobalt.

After I had dined at Cobalt's most fashionable restaurant, I, in due course, lay down to sleep in the little tent. I had no sooner got settled than the flap was lifted, and a voice inquired how many were the inhabitants. I remarked that I was the limitation, with the consequence that I soon had a bedfellow.

My bedfellow was from British Honduras, an American by birth, an M.D. by profession. He had a claim and a camp in Frog Swamp, with a big bull moose as a neighbor. He thought he had a good prospect, and had got his claim recorded.

As my new acquaintance told me his history, at least that which conveyed the above-mentioned information

concerning him, conversation among the "Sourdoughs" became vigorous.

"You know the 'Oregon Mare' who used to dance in Miller's on Front Street?" interrogated the Colonel. "Well, she hit the trail from Dawson in December, and mushed right through to Nome in six weeks."

"Yes, and there was 'Gumboot Kitty'; she was one of the worst grafters in Dawson. She would take a man down the line for every cent he owned," assented the mirthful Richard.

High revelry was being held in the tent of the "Sourdoughs," and the singing of the clan's favorite song was frequently indulged in by Dick:

"Oh, de Irish dey was full of de booze,
An' dey said, Come along an' we'll kill all de Jews,
An' we'll put old Dawson City on ze bum."

With reflections on the number of wild jamborees those accents and words had been heard at in the glitter of the Klondike capital at its zenith, I again settled down to rest.

"Oh, yes; the 'Nigger Jim' stampede. I was on that. Me and another fellow started from Dawson with two pair of blankets, and three cans of beef extract for grub, and there were hundreds of other fellows just like us. The thermometer stayed around fifty for the next week, and nearly every fellow was frozen more or less. Some got frozen to death."

It was the Colonel who spoke. Here, where had been found wealth greater than that of the great Golden Yukon, were being recounted the tales of hardships of those subarctic regions.

III.

I MET Pard on Monday in the railway cutting at the north of Cobalt.

"Good morning," I said, as he did not notice me.

"Good morning," he replied, bringing his eyes up from the ground and fixing them with an intent gaze into mine.

"What do you think of the camp?" I asked.

He sat down on a point of rock and I did the same. He had seen but little of the camp, but was pleased with it.

"Now, Pard," I said, "what do you think of the proposition of getting into the bush for a while and seeing if we can dig up anything? Suppose we hit up the game for a week east of Cross Lake?"

"I'll go you," he replied.

"All right," I said. "What grub and outfit have you got? I'll get what you have not." He then gave me a list of his blankets, cooking utensils, etc., and I found that to complete it and add sufficient grub for a week would make me about half owner of the whole. So, accordingly, we returned to Cobalt and made the purchases, Pard doing considerable grumbling the while.

"They charge enough for their outfits here. Why, they taxed me seven dollars for a 5 x 7 'A' tent, and I have bought them for five dollars at Barkerville, in

the Cariboo country, where they had to be hauled two hundred miles by teams." He admitted that the tent he had purchased in Cobalt was of better quality, but continued: "There is no need to have heavy duck in prospectors' tents; drill is good enough and it is lighter to pack."

There were grounds for his criticism, but his persistency showed a decided grudge against the East.

Half an hour after meeting we were again leaving the settlement, Pard with a bag of bread and other provisions thrown over his shoulder, and I with a pack containing an additional blanket and more grub in a pack-strap. On coming to Pard's camp it was quickly demolished and our two loads added to the heap. We now faced the problem of making the whole into two packs of practically equal weight, and these two packs were to contain our tent and our blankets, several picks and a shovel and a week's food, besides changes of underclothes, etc. It is wonderful how many things really do enter into one's life, even in a week, but our selection had been made by an experienced head and was reduced to a minimum.

To moralize with a sixty-pound pack on one's back on a heartbreaking trail is easy, but conversation is not inspired, unless it is profanity, when the flies are bad. The flies were gone for the season, so we said not a word until we reached Cross Lake.

The northern forest, when it first breaks into green in early summer, is a refreshing sight. When ripeness is upon it and it lies resplendent with its autumnal colorings in golden sunlight, it is a noble sight. The latter was ours.

A friendly acquaintance put us across the lake in his canoe, and the way Pard handled a paddle showed him to be an expert.

Having reached the east side of the lake we decided on dinner. Words are few among experienced campers. Packs are thrown off, and the man who first gets the tea-kettle in his hands is immediately constituted cook, and while his fellow makes the fire, he fills it with water from the supply which is never far distant from the point selected for camp. If the tent is to be set up and camp made for the night, one man generally allots himself to making camp, while his fellow builds the fire and cooks supper. If it is only lunch, the partner who makes the fire generally, after he has finished that job, constitutes himself assistant cook.

Our meal was cooked and eaten with great satisfaction. After the meal my companion made himself comfortable and filled his pipe. As he lay reclining I noticed he had a revolver strapped round his waist, which now became exposed owing to his position. On the holster was printed in irregular order, "Ed. N. O'Neil." I now learned for the first time the name of my new friend.

"Pard," I said, as I got my pipe going, "a little grub does make life look better once in a while, doesn't it?"

"Yes," he drawled, "it does." He gazed at the fire embers, and I saw coming into his eyes for the first time that look which afterwards I learned to know as indicating the flow of reminiscence through his mind. He then began one of those stories which none but the

Western man can tell. His was the Western humor, and his language was affected in that half-serious way by the use of long words and unwieldy phrases which go far to make up the diversion in such tales. Long winter nights and even days in the mountains give ample opportunity for reading, and the Western prospector often has a volume of Shakespeare in his pack as a highly condensed mass of reading, and he has learned that heavy reading furnishes the greatest abstraction. So it is that the trapper and the prospector often has a vocabulary replete with terms and words uncommon in the vulgar tongue, which, coming into a conversation ungrammatically, lends, perhaps, the greater part of the humor of the Western tale.

"I was only once," began my partner, "real short of grub, and that was in the Selkirks years ago. Me and my partner was camped over the divide from Toby Creek putting in the winter trapping, and one day along in early March I hit the trail for town to get a few little things we needed and to get a little fresh news. Well, it had been snowing heavy for some days back, but it showed signs of clearing up the night before, and the morning I left the stars showed some, though kind of hazy. It was twenty-five miles into town, and this with soft snow makes travelling slow and heavy, even with snowshoes. Well, along about noon I was getting towards the summit and out of the timber, and I noticed the weather was looking real bad again. The sun had risen behind a cloud, for it did not show in the peaks when it ought to have, and that cloud was all over the sky again by ten o'clock.

"Now the snow was beginning to sediment its beautiful canopy through the ethereal in a high-class business fashion that started me contemplating if another glacial age was not pretty soon due on earth. If I was wise I would have right-about-faced right then, but I was more than half way to town, and I don't like turning tail to any sort of a proposition, so I kept right on to negotiate the divide when I couldn't see ten feet ahead of me, thinking I could cross from the canyon I was in to the valley of Toby Creek as easy as falling off a log. In looking over that divide again when spring's gentle zephyrs was playing hide-and-seek through the saw-teeth, I never could rightly make out how I came to get off the track; but I did, and just about the time I was beginning to think it was time I should quit climbing, I ran into a perpendicular cliff and realized I was nowhere. There was no such proposition as this on the trail from Bear Creek (that was the creek I had come up and which our cabin was on), and I realized I had got up a draw either to the right or left of the pass. I stood for a while and looked back, and then at the rocks on each side, and back again to those which first blocked my way. The crystallized aqueous vapor was falling the size of goose feathers, soft, slow and persistent. They seemed to make a slight rustling, silky sort of noise as they came to rest on their predecessors, but this did not, if it was real and not my fancy, break the silence of the place. I hollered, just for fun, and did not get an echo, but the sound was drunk in by the snow, and I felt as if I had lost something. I was too old a hand

not to realize that I was lost, and lost bad, and perhaps it was the full realization of this that kept me from losing my nerve. When a feller is plumb up face to face with death where he knows that his only chance is keeping his head, he will generally do it. It was now a case of turn back for sure, so I slid along down hill a bit, and then kept working a bit to the right. Every now and again I would run up against rock going right in the air. Once I took my knife and cut the moss off the rock, and looked at it close and saw it was granite. Both Bear Creek and Toby Creek were in the granite, so this didn't tell me much. However, it's always well to keep watching. You see, I always size up the formation of the country as a sort of principle. After travelling about ten minutes I again started to edge up hill a bit, and worked round into another draw. Up this I started for all I was worth, for if it was a pass I wanted to get into timber at least before it got dark, although the night couldn't do much harm.

"It was not very long before I quit climbing, for the ground was level. I made good time and travelled about a mile, doing the best I knew how to keep going straight in the direction I had come up. Finally, I began to go down hill again, and I heard the trickle of water deep down under the snow. The level ground I had passed over was a lake and this was draining it. Here was a puzzler to me; there was no lake draining into Toby Creek. I kept on, however, when pretty soon I heard a gurgling, roaring sort of a noise under the snow. I concluded it was a pretty good notion to go slow a bit, but too late. The whole canyon seemed

to be moving with a kind of grinding noise, only softer. The next thing I knew all was over and I was digging myself out of the snow. I had come over a precipice about twenty feet high. No bones broken.

"This was not Toby Creek, and where I was then God only knows. So I ate what lunch I had left, for I had been chewing at it all along, and after that I got my pipe going and felt better. I took out my knife and scratched the rock. It was not granite, but a sort of slate.

"There was nothing for it but to keep going. The snow continued and the creek only gurgled once in a long while. After I got over my disappointment I liked that creek; it was sort of company. Other times the stillness kind of seemed to feel as if it was the mountains themselves bearing a fellow down.

"That night I made a sort of camp under a big spruce tree in which I found a porcupine, which I killed. I cut some brush with my hunting knife and got a fire going, but I had no axe. Next morning I hit the trail again, but that was the last thing I remember distinctly. I know I killed more porcupines, but they ain't much better than nothing to eat.

"The next thing I remember was that one morning I ran up against a cabin with smoke coming out of it. I looked at it and it seemed familiar, and I opened the door and walked in.

" 'Hello, Ed,' says Bill, my partner. 'You've been a long time away. Got drunk?'

"I was back home, though how I got there God only knows. I never got drunk and Bill knew it. I was

trying to make out whether I was on earth or whether I had gone plumb bughouse, so I says: 'What day is this?'

"'Wednesday, the 14th.'

"'And I set out?'

"'Last Thursday,' answers Bill.

"'Well, I ain't had a meal since, so you better dish up anything you have cooked quick.'

"'Not by a d—— sight, if your story's right,' says he, and he came over and caught me by the arm and hauled me round to the light. My eyes was kind of staring, and he says I had something of the look of a wolf left a couple of days in a trap. This kind of made him realize that I had been up against it hard, and he soon got me to bed, where he began feeding me as you would a baby. He started with a little condensed milk and water, and gradually led up to some boiled goat after feeding me a little of the broth.

"After he got me resting a bit, Bill went out and followed my tracks for a mile or two and found I had come up Bear Creek, not down. I bet if you could map my travels those six days the plan would beat the *pons asinorum* struck by a cyclone."

The story was ended and my companion put away his pipe and manipulated himself into harness, and I did the same. We travelled along an old trail cut for timbering operations years ago, and after following this some distance we took to a concession line, which we followed until we reached a spot which suited us for a permanent camp. The concession line ran east and west and a trail ran north and south. We were at the intersection.

IV.

Our camp was on the fringe of the prospected area rather than outside of it, and it was not far to Kerr Lake and the mines which made that section famous. These mines Pard and I visited the day after we established permanent camp, to gain what further knowledge we could of the Cobalt ore deposits.

Crossing Cross Lake, we landed at the foot of the road that led to Kerr and Giroux lakes, up which we began to travel. Prospectors were coming and going: silent when loaded or with packs on their backs, but talking loudly otherwise. Words of mining camp parlance ever caught the ear, and actions and words alike betokened a general nervous tension and excitement. A good find was reported at Kirk Lake, while a great big vein of cobalt had been found south of Haileybury in Bucke Township, and the finder wanted $100,000 for his find. One man had trenched seven miles and never made a find, while another man had made a discovery he considered good enough to work on, but the Inspector had thrown out his claim, and others had begun prospecting on it.

Silver, cobalt, claims, discoveries, and the recording of claims and discoveries filled men's minds and inspired their speech. It was a rush and grab for wealth; the workingman of to-day might be a millionaire of to-morrow. We came on one claim and saw several parties working.

"Well, friends," remarked Pard to one of these groups, "trying to make discovery?"

"Yes," replied one of the men spoken to, "but not gettin' there very fast."

And then another of the group spoke up: "There are fifty-three people in eleven separate parties working on this claim, all trying to get discovery."

We strolled over the ground and took a look at the different points being worked. I remarked to Pard the utter impossibility of ever finding anything at most of the points being worked, to which he replied:

"Yes, but advice is no good; a wise man don't need it, and a fool won't take it."

While we were on the claim we heard several cries of "Fire!" and stood behind trees while the explosion was made and the resulting fragments had ceased to pepper the earth.

"Poor way to prospect," was my companion's comment, "putting a shot in here and there and setting it off to see the rocks fly. That's what I call prospecting with powder, and it comes mighty expensive."

We continued to a real mine, and certainly a mine it was. An open cut was being carried into the hill, and out of this was being hoisted ore such as has won the fame of Cobalt. The cut was about twenty feet wide, and in this width embraced two or three veins. The veins were two to five inches wide and the vein matter was of cobalt ore,—smaltite and silver. The silver was distinguished from the smaltite by its sharp metallic projections. Pard looked at the ore, scraped it with his knife and "hefted" it in his hands. As the vein was broken off the hanging wall of the cut, large

slabs of ore were being removed from it, occurring between the vein matter proper and the wall. This the foreman told us was argentite, which we knew to be a very high ore of silver.

When the ordinary man comes upon a mining claim and finds great wealth in the possession of another man which might have been his had he been on the ground a short time before his present advent, he is visited by a development of the primitive instinct which prompts possession by might. As the law does not permit its execution he is limited to moralizing how very blind fate is, and summing up the many reasons why the world's destiny would have been better assured had he been the finder and possessor of the gift of nature.

"Well," said Pard, as we passed along the road, "I have known mines and prospects out West being named the 'Ready Bullion,' but that proposition we just left comes nearer earning it than any I have seen. Of course, these veins are narrow, and they would cost no more to mine if they were ten times wider. That ore runs between two and three thousand dollars to the ton, and one-tenth of that, two or three hundred dollars per ton, for twenty to fifty inches wide, would be considered mighty big pay."

The next property we visited was one of which great things were said by the public. Here we found an open cut run into the hill, and on the hanging cut of the wall there appeared about half an inch of vein matter much decomposed and mixed with cobalt bloom. To the eye there was but little silver. For the half inch of questionable ore being taken out a cut

eight feet wide was being carried into the hill. We remarked to the foreman the amount of ground that had to be removed for a small amount of ore, and were told such a big cut was necessary, as the ground shook loose with the blasting and had to be taken down for safety. We were told the vein had been much wider where it had already been mined, and were shown places on other parts of the property where the veins showed wide, also some samples of ore with native silver sticking out of the cobalt in irregular manner. This Pard did not like as well—called it spectacular, said that it was a specimen ore. "I don't like this proposition at all," said he. "You'll find people will be greatly deceived in it. This silver has come into the cobalt after the cobalt was deposited in the veins, as you see the little veins of metallic silver running through the cobalt ore, showing that fissures have occurred in the cobalt as fissures have occurred in the rock before the cobalt was deposited. What I like to see is values evenly distributed through the mass of the ore, as I like to see values distributed well up into the gravel off of bed-rock in placer. In the Klondike country there were a whole lot of claims on which you could get a dollar to the pan of bed-rock, but the pay would not run up in the gravel. A couple of inches off of bed-rock you would not get a cent to the pan, and the people used to wonder why it would not pay to work; but to make money you want pay regular and lots of it. You will find the same with this proposition. They can get samples that will assay all kinds of values, but when they come to get smelter returns there will be something lacking."

That evening as we lay before our camp fire we naturally took to further discussion of what we had seen, and the conversation drifting to the local methods of prospecting, I stated that I thought the general tendency was to begin sinking operations on surface indications not at all warranting the expenditure.

"In the general run of things you're right, Billy," said Pard (he had taken to using my pet appellation); "only about one prospect in a thousand turns out any good, and yet it is always the biggest fools that make the finds. I mind I was one of the outfit that stood on Eldorado Creek laughing at the fellows staking French Hill in the Dawson country back in '98—Chechackoes we called them—yet three men took out twenty-seven hundred dollars a day off of rim-rock on one of these claims, and some of the biggest nuggets found in the whole Klondike were found on French Hill.

"Perhaps, however, it was Charlie Andersen, the lucky Swede, who played in the biggest fool luck of any man in the whole Klondike country, and his case will show you that there is no telling what a little digging will do in mining. Late in '96, a few months after Cormack had discovered rich pay on Bonanza Creek, and the boys had all come up from Forty Mile and staked everything in sight, one night two fellows, who had staked 29 Eldorado Creek, got Charlie drunk and sold him a claim for eight hundred dollars. Charlie next day found himself with no money, and realized he was up against six months' winter with flour a dollar a pound and other things in proportion. Most everything sold at a dollar a pound all round—sugar, beans,

rice and so on; it didn't matter much what the first cost outside was. Charlie went to these fellows with tears in his eyes and asked for his money back, and they laughed at him. Then he did another crazy thing, for he started to prospect his claim, that is, it appeared crazy to the fellows round. 'I tank I put a hole down on her,' he said in his fool way. Well, he got to bed-rock and he discovered the biggest kind of pay. Take a shovelful of dirt off bed-rock, put the dirt in a pan and wash it a bit, and from twenty to a hundred dollars would shine up. The creek bottom cleaned up from one to three thousand dollars per running foot, and the whole claim turned out something like a million dollars.

"It was the discovery of Eldorado Creek pay that put the crowd crazy, and Charlie was the craziest of them all. Well, Charlie then began to blow himself properly in the dance halls, and, of course, fell in love. He married one of the girls, or at least she married him.

"All this shows that gold—and silver is much the same—is where you find it, as the saying is, though I wouldn't hardly advise Charlie's trail a good one to follow as a sure thing proposition.

"What became of Charlie? Well, Charlie was trotted off to 'Frisco, where he domiciled with his loving wife in a thirty thousand dollar house which he built for her, until she sued him for divorce on the grounds of cruelty. Of course, the girl won, and Charlie is working in a sawmill in British Columbia at two dollars per day. The girl got all his money left over by the lawyers."

V.

THE first day we went prospecting we travelled east along the concession line, and immediately we found that we were going down hill. On the brow of the decline the country rock outcropped very strongly, a fire which had passed over the locality not long previously having burnt away the moss. The district had been lumbered for its pine years ago. The roads cut in connection with these operations were grown up with second growth birches and poplars ten feet high. "There's many a lumber-jack working for twelve or fifteen dollars a month, which was the going wage in them days," said Pard, "who has fairly scratched some of these silver veins with the nails of his boots and never knew what he was up against."

As the district had been lumbered the fires did not do so much damage, but early operations had only attacked the pine; the spruce and cedar were there in primeval state. This class of timber was now of much greater value than formerly, and the thought that it was an even chance that the fire which had done the damage that was seen by us had been set with the object of making the search for minerals more expeditious inspired the further thought that the discovery of a mining field had its drawbacks. Our conversation turned in this direction. "Yes," said Pard, "these fellows will turn loose a fire and burn thou-

sands and thousands of dollars' worth of timber if they think it will give them another chance in a hundred to make a find. I've seen it in the West where whole valleys in the mountains was cleaned out by fellows setting fires to help make discoveries."

We came across some abandoned prospect holes in the barren diabase rock. What indication of minerals possibly existing in depth the fellows who had put down this hole had seen neither of us could guess. Among the prospectors in the country generally the feeling seemed to pervade that to be at work on a claim was sufficient to give possession, and possession meant a possible sale on speculative instincts. With my partner there was one universal standard, particularly in all matters pertaining to mining, and that was the "West." "Things are different here," he would say; "out West fellows wouldn't disgrace themselves by staking claims without discovery as they do here. A fellow generally finds something out West before he makes a record.

"Prospecting here is different, too; these ledges and veins in this country absolutely don't throw out any indications. There's no float in this country owing to its being so new; that is, the time since the glacial period in these parts has been so short—about seven thousand years, so the geologists reckon—that the country has had no opportunity to wear down since then, with the consequence there is no float. In the West it is the float we all prospect by. Take any creek bottom in the mountains and have a look into the bed of it, and you'll pretty soon be able to tell every kind

of rock that creek travels through, and if there is any iron stain go after it, for there ain't anything like iron as an indication of mineral, and the oldtimers have a saying, 'Iron is the mother of all minerals.' Out West, too, the country is heavier, generally, and you can get more rock in sight and see the stains, but here the country is flatter, and not only have the glaciers carried away the float, but they have planed down the country and cleaned off any iron or other stains. Of course, there is the cobalt bloom which has had time to make since the glaciers left, but it don't travel far. Silver does not throw out any stain, only turns black, and what little iron is along with these veins does not seem to have stained up at all. So I guess if we want to find anything we have got simply to scratch till we do find it."

We floundered through a good deal of swamp that day, which, of course, presented no scope for prospecting, but in the afternoon came across a few outcroppings of conglomerate rock. These points, projecting through the clay soil, were not of very great extent, and, of course, presented proportionately limited possibilities. We scooped out all open cracks we could find, and made a thorough search and turned our way homeward. On the way home we met some partridge, and Pard brought his revolver into play with highly satisfactory results, shooting two birds in the neck, an extremely hard thing to do with a revolver. We had a stew with the birds as chief constituent, while seasoning was accomplished by the addition of small squares of ham.

The glories of the autumnal day ended with our supper, and while I washed the dishes my partner busied himself with his axe. Birch he cut four feet long of substantial thickness and piled the sticks near the fire. He smoked deeply and was thinking. He piled the fire high with wood, and both of us lounged before it in our customary places.

The air with its stimulation, the firelight flickering against the adjacent trees with its loss in the depths of the forest, the peace and solitude of our position lent a weirdness to our atmosphere, while stomachs full of wholesome food and bodies tired by willing exertion gave us a perfect contentment, the whole constituting Autumn's charm in the forest. We gazed in silence at the flames until my companion spoke.

"There are some things in heaven and earth that are not compassed by our philosophy, as Shakespeare says. Now, I don't know exactly how far the scientists have gone towards forcing a show-down from Nature in regard to her illuminations in the northern heavens in winter nights—I mean the northern lights; but I do know I got mixed up among them in the mountains north of Dawson in the winter of '98, and that my hair ain't grey simply shows that I had got over being frightened before that time. Dawson then was short of grub, and fresh meat was a dollar and a dollar and a half a pound and mighty scarce at that. Even canned truck was scarce at any money. In the restaurants a meal of pork and beans cost two dollars and a half, and in the cabins and tents around a good many fellows had beans without pork. Well, a part-

ner and me had a hunch where some meat could be killed back in the Rockies,* at the head of Twelvemile, and we just naturally went there and made a slaughter —moose, of course. Well, we killed four or five and hauled their bodies into a heap as well as we could, and my partner stayed in camp to watch the meat while I toted part of it into town.

"Well, I got one load into town, and sold all right with the money in my pocket, and next day lit out back for camp. I had a good dog team, and I gave them a good licking all round at first excuse just to show I was boss, and so I made pretty good time. It had been pretty late in the day when I got things fixed in town and got my team hitched up, but this was as I wanted it, for we had a pretty good moon, which didn't rise till about six, and I didn't want to come to the hard part of the trail till the moon was up. So far as the daylight was concerned, it quit at four o'clock. About six o'clock I came to the last of the timber going up the valley of the Twelvemile, and I lit a fire and made a little tea. I made a supper off some bread and dried fruit. As I got up pretty well on the Twelvemile I edged off to the right, climbing the ridge that separated Twelvemile from the creek in which was our cache. As I got on the hog's back the moon was shining mighty bright, and I saw the Rocky Mountains stretching away up along the Klondike River looking something splendid. Down in the valleys in the Yukon, when it gets cold a fog settles and

*Popular usage calls the range of mountains here indicated the "Rockies" though they are properly the Ogilvie Range.

you can't see much of anything plain, but once you get above the fog, why there ain't nothing on top of earth that looks so much as if it weren't there at all as the Klondike atmosphere. Well, those mountains fairly stared at you, and I thought I could reach out and grab any one of them. Beside the bright moonlight I pretty soon noticed that the Aurora Borealis was doing business on a pretty extensive scale, and I stopped the dogs to take a look at it. Way off on the range towards the north-east, things were doing in big style, and pretty soon I noticed the performance was coming my way. At first it moved rather slow, but soon it flung out its banners quicker like, and pretty soon it was mighty interesting. The light was getting brighter all the time, and even the dogs began to take notice. In shape it looked nothing so much as a big eel with three or four tails, moving tails first, each tail being flung out in a different direction and lashing the heavens all around. On the blooming reptile came, and its sand-shifting noise grew into a roar. Pink, blue, green, orange—all the colors were there, extending from the heavens themselves down into the valleys below me. Down the hog's back from the main range one of these tails, unwreathing itself and fairly dancing, came towards me. The dogs now took to howling, pointing their noses to the heavens and pouring forth the deep distress that seemed to move their souls. This, as you may suppose, kind of scared me more, but what's the use? I couldn't do anything. The hair on the dogs was now standing on end, and I guess mine was pretty near that way too, or would have been if

my cap had not been there to hold it on. Have you ever seen a whirlwind playing down a road in summer, raising the dust and paper and stuff? Well, that was the way this here Aurora Borealis proposition struck me, only bigger. The first thing I knew I knew nothing, except that I kind of had a feeling I was going into the air, just as if there was a lot of iron in a fellow's make-up and a big magnet hung over his head. Outside of that ten thousand rainbows was doing the grand roping act in a Wild West show, with me as the steer, while the howls from the dogs was as far ahead of the yells of the broncho busters as anything well could be; and as for the dogs themselves, they was sort of bucking like a broncho turned mean.

"The thing played for about five minutes, if a fellow is able to reckon time during such goings on, when I found I was out of it. Just then I got a clout on the side of the head and made a grab at what hit me. I missed, but the thing fell on the snow, and I reached down and picked it up. It was a ptarmigan, white as the snow itself, and as I heard a rushing noise come on again I took a good look into the air, and made out that thousands of ptarmigan were passing in a flock. Fellows who was over the ground next spring told me there was any number of the birds lying around, having evidently become blinded and killed themselves by pitching into the snow. Was the roaring noise I had heard all through from the lights? I don't think so, at least not altogether. These birds, scared by thousands out of the snow in which they burrow, had a lot to do with it.

"All was soon still except an occasional whine from the dogs, and that strange feeling began to come over a fellow as when he thinks too much alone in the mountains, so I finally broke away and started again for camp. The last I saw of the display was a flare away off in the north-west towards the Forty Mile. The dogs acted as if I had given them the best licking they had ever got in their lives, and not one of them tried to chew his traces for the rest of the way home."

VI.

A COLD drizzle met us next morning and soon we had rain, steady and persistent. Our fire-place we moved under a large spruce tree, and we managed to cook and eat breakfast without discomfort. So far our activities had stimulated us, but, breakfast over and dishes washed, the conviction forced itself upon us that we were in for an unpleasant spell. What a transformation had come upon our environment! The glorious blue sky of yesterday was replaced by one of a deep lead color. The great trees of the forest shook themselves in the wind, and showered down their watery burden with their leaves in which now of beauty there was none. They were the same leaves of yesterday, but they were wet and clammy and cold. To-day it was not ripeness that was upon them—it was death. The little maple saplings sagged under the weight of water upon them, and ambition in them seemed dead.

In our tent it was cold and we soon abandoned it. The only thing to do was to build up a giant wood-pile and sit over the fire. With this burning brightly we placed our backs to the spruce tree and made ourselves content. It was not long before my companion settled down to steady speech.

"There are no people who have been worse misrepresented by the writers in magazines and books than the fellows out West, and there is more utter rot

printed each year about the West than would stuff a library. It seems like as if every fool of a story-writer who wants to make the hero of his yarn prove himself a goody-goody youth, trots him out West into a mining camp, where Alkali Ikes and Rattlesnake Petes draw guns on him and raise Cain generally the first go off, with the newcomer finally holding prayer-meetings over them and having them converted. Now, I suppose these fellows write these yarns because the public wants them, and the public likes them because they think they are the proper thing, but it ain't so by a long shot. Out West fellows don't carry guns much except when they are in the woods as we are now, or just going into the woods or just coming out of it. A gun is a mighty handy thing in the woods, and I'll tell you some day how I got mixed up with a big bear out in the Selkirks, and how I put him out of business with this gun I carry here. These story fellows like to tell of the rough miners, but you won't find miners and prospectors any more disorderly than any other class of citizen, and they are a hanged sight more honest than most. There were some pretty hard cases out West, I will admit, in early days, but these fellows were there simply because the East was too hot for them. You will seldom find a hard case amongst the prospectors and miners themselves, for prospecting and mining is hard work and it's only honest men that tackle hard work; the tough cases follow to live off of them. When I was a kid I took to reading the rot about the West which was just turning out then, and like most young fools 'locoed' on the bad-man game, I

began to let my hair grow long. When it was getting down over my shoulders my father began to catch on, and lectured me about the crazy notions I got out of the books I was reading. Finally he made a break to cut my hair, and I lit out for Deadwood. This camp was just getting over its first boom, growing out of the finding of placer in the Black Hills, and as the stampede had been mighty heavy, and a mighty lot of people was starving in the country, it was not long before a gang of bad men took to holding up people regular. Things was pretty bad when I finally struck camp one night in December about six o'clock, and the Sheriff and his fellows were chasing everywhere for cattle thieves and road agents.

"As I was moseying down the main street, sizing up the shops and saloons and gambling halls and all the rest of the fixings of a mining camp in early days, I heard the click of a six-shooter and a fellow says, 'Hold up your hands!'

"You bet I held them up all right, for I knew what the click meant. I turned around and asked the fellow what he was laying for me for, and he said: 'You know very well what it's for. Now, hike off down the street there.'

"So down the street I went, me with my hands trying to catch hold of the stars or the moon or something, and the other fellow covering me with a revolver. It was not a case of holding me up for the few dollars I had on me, as he would have gone through me first go off. It was evident that he belonged to the Sheriff's fellows and that I was arrested, but what for I could

not make out. Every fellow I passed kind of sized me up, and a couple of small fellows followed us, though such doings was common enough those days. I took to thinking pretty hard what I was arrested for, and I thought of everything bad I had done at home, but there was nothing I could pick out that would explain things, and I was commencing to think of home and of mother and the advice father had given me. I was becoming plumb sorry I had not followed my father's advice, when a fellow, who I afterwards found out to be the Sheriff, yells out: "Who have you got here?"

" 'The Coyote Kid,' says the fellow holding the gun.

" 'No it ain't, turn the young devil loose.'

"Say, I was glad to hear those words, and about ten ton of trouble seemed to melt out of my system. I afterwards seen the Coyote kid hung as a horse thief, and I saw he was built much like me. I don't think there was any real tendency to crime in my make-up, but if there was that hanging-match took it plumb out of me.

"After the Sheriff turned me loose he asked me round to have supper with him, which I was only too glad to do. The Sheriff seemed to take a liking to me, and while we was eating supper he said:

" 'There is no way a kid makes a blame fool of himself more than by trying to represent himself as something which he ain't. Now, you ain't a bad man; you wouldn't steal if you got a chance, let alone hold a man up. You have just gone crazy reading bad-man stories and accounts of what is going on round here. Now, you get that fool head of yours clipped and I'll

give you a job running messages, and if we pull together later on you can go on as a scout where you will have all the chance for gun play you want, only it will be on the side of the law.'

"Now you bet he was right, and I knew he was as I now know my father had been. In most diggings you can't pick out the bad men by their togs, it's only the amateurs and the four-flushers who have guns stuck all over them. It's the fellow who will shoot from his pocket that is dangerous, or who gets it so quick you think it was always out. As for bad men themselves, a man's chances is pretty good among them so long as he minds his own business, but the fellow who is always butting in will get into trouble anywhere. As for their society, you will find it real pleasant. One of the nicest fellows I ever met had a record of sixteen men, but then there is always a lot of cultus malamoots prowling around who need killing and somebody's got to do it.

"Another thing I have against these here novelists is the way they take up the drinking that goes on in the mining camps. I want to say right here that there is more real bad drunkenness around any lumber town East here than you will find in the mining camp West, and what professional drunks there are out West are mostly from railroad construction gangs and not miners or prospectors. Of course, there are fellows in the mines who can't get a pay-check but that they have to get drunk and blow her in before they consider it proper to go to work again. One of these fellows I mind was 'Whole-Hog Rogers,' who could saturate

more booze than any individual I ever clapped eyes on. One year I was wintering with Mike Sullivan, who run the Pay-Streak Hotel at Toby Creek. Mike had grub-staked me the summer before, and as I didn't have no luck I kind of gave Mike a hand through the winter. Well, sir, 'Whole-Hog' had been at the Pay-Streak for a week, and had blown in a couple of hundred dollars wages. One night there was a bit of a poker game on. Mike and some friends were taking chances against each other and 'Whole-Hog' was just naturally butting in and acting mean like. Well, Mike didn't want to use him rough, seeing he had blowed his money in the Pay-Streak, so he calls me over and says, 'Give that son-of-a-gun a dose that will knock him plumb out,' and went on with his game. I called 'Whole-Hog' over and told him that the boss said he was to have no more booze, and that I was to kick him out if he was ornery. Then I went behind the bar and took a big beer schooner and poured some Scotch whiskey into it. Well, I put some of every darned thing I could find behind that bar into that glass, and I finally filled it to the running-over point with red hot Irish whiskey. Then I kind of beckons to 'Whole-Hog' cute like, and slipped the glass to him of a sudden. Well, sir, he downs the whole business, just as a boy would so much milk. I watched his actions a bit. He staggered round some and finally he lay down on a bench talking to himself or the booze he had inside of him, or the snakes he must have been seeing by this time. I stayed behind the bar cleaning up, and in about ten minutes the game broke up and the boys

came over to cash in. The fellow who made the biggest winnings called for the drinks first, and as the bottle was going round, if that there blame 'Whole-Hog' didn't raise up from the bench and stagger over to the bar and say, 'Say, Pard, ain't I in on this?'

"Whiskey has queer and different effects on people, but there ain't none of it that is any good as far as I can see. A whole lot of people says whiskey is good in cold weather. Now, I know it ain't. The man who takes whiskey on the trail with him in winter is a fool. Put two men out fifty or sixty below zero, one with a bottle of whiskey and the other without, and the man with the booze will turn up his toes first, all else being equal. Tea and cocoa is the best.

"Speaking of getting cold on the trail, a man is not liable to get frozen as long as he keeps moving, that is, a fellow who knows how to tog himself. You very seldom hear of a man getting frozen on the Yukon trails unless he is a tenderfoot or gets wet. If a fellow gets wet, however, when the quick* is frozen he's got to get a move on or he'll cross the divide into the happy hunting grounds where the shell game does not play and the dance halls don't have checks.

"I had a pretty close shave a few days after old Borealis did the grand I told you about up in the Yukon. Well, after that grand flare-up we had a snowstorm and the wind blew a bit, which isn't common in the Yukon; if it was you would find no white people in there—couldn't stand it. This wind shooed

*Miners' term for quicksilver used by them for the amalgamation of gold.

the snow over a blow-hole on the Twelvemile, and it froze there a bit. The weather was pretty cold and the quick was hard frozen; it turns solid at about forty below, and the rule of the oldtimers is, when the quick is frozen stay home and boil beans.

"I wasn't home boiling beans or even swapping lies, but I was doing a stunt down Twelvemile with fifteen hundred pounds of meat on my sled, which meant fifteen hundred dollars in Dawson. Getting along and making good time I walked right into a blow-hole and went down to my neck. Well, I was good and warm when I went in, but I knew I would be cold pretty quick either in or out of the water. I grabbed the sled as it passed and yelled to the dogs to mush on. They pulled me out all right, and I put my hands into my pocket and pulled out a pair of candles I had there. With my foot I scraped away the snow to the moss. I broke the candles in two, and got some matches out of a waterproof safe I carry, and lit up. Then I went dancing through the bush, breaking dead willows and putting the sticks on top of the candles—there's a kind of willow that when it dries if you break it it will run into long slits like what the Siwashes make baskets of, and this will burn on the jump off. In about two minutes I had a good fire going, and in about two more I had several logs cut from a dead tree that some kind of a bug had killed years before, and then I chucked a blanket against some bushes to kind of act as a reflector, and I got between the fire and the blanket. For about five minutes I stood there shivering and feeling a cast-iron casing

closing in on me. My hands now were useless, and I was beginning to feel as if the cold would fairly crush me down, and that the sleep was coming over me that in those parts means death. I shook it off, however, and pretty soon the fire began to brighten up and the blanket began to steam. Then I began to steam, and I started to jump round and round and squeeze the water out of me as well as I could. I was getting quite warm by the time the fire began to peter out, but I was a long way from dry.

"Say, when I struck that cold air, my clothes all steaming and me half frozen, half roasted—the records in Dawson show it was fifty below zero that day—I felt as if a load of salt had been poured into me out of a double-barrelled shotgun. However, I was up against it hard, and I just had to make an everlasting hustle. I was pretty near coagulated when I got the fire built up, and I was a darned sight worse before the fire got rightly going again. When it did, things came along all right and I was soon cooking moose steaks."

VII.

WITH the return of good weather we decided to prolong our prospecting trip, and I went into town for more grub. The town was full of newcomers, and mining experts with their ostentatious dress were conspicuous. The youth fresh from college, burdened with the weight of what he did not know, was strutting about self-conscious and vain. His brown canvas suit, leather leggings, and peaked cap to his idea were a-la-mode, and fortune lay before him and his patrons. Alas for the industry of mining! How many and how great are the burdens heaped upon the credit of the noblest art on earth! The wild-cat promoter in the name of mining robs the public, the ignorant and confiding; and the youth who has read and studied of mines and minerals thinks he is qualified to spend his own and other people's money in the attempt to win from nature her treasure stores.

A guest was with the "Sourdough Quartette." "Old Neil," I heard him styled, and from my position at the neighboring tent I noticed that a great deal of hospitality was being shown him. He was certainly old and large; an ill-cared-for beard was plentifully streaked with grey, and his features bore all the marks of dissipation long-continued and deep. He was evidently one of those unfortunate characters who crop out so conspicuously on the frontier, and whose

periods of soberness occur only when money and credit are alike dissolved. There was a craftiness marked upon his physiognomy, the ability to cope with schemers and save his own, and even the gift of scheming.

The value of Old Neil's find none could deny; the samples he showed were of the camp's highest class ore. "Feel the silver sticking out of it," whispered the "Cap" to the Colonel as he handed the latter the piece of ore.

"I'll give the boys the hottest time in the way of a champagne supper ever seen around here," replied the Colonel.

> "Oh, de Irish dey was full of de booze,
> An' dey said, Come along an' we'll kill all de Jews,
> An' we'll put old Dawson City on ze bum,"

sang Dick. Teddy was silent and thoughtful, and the least drunk of the outfit.

With ending of the daylight I visited several of the neighboring camp fires to gain what news and gossip I could from those whom I knew or fell into conversation with, it did not matter which. Cobalt and silver had been found in Windigo Lake, thirty miles north, and like reports were coming in from the Temagami Timber Reserve, one of the empires of forest and lakes which the Ontario Government has set aside against the time of need. Spud Murphy was blowing in the ten thousand dollars he received for a quarter interest in the Rachael mine. He was now on the verge of the D. T.'s, and other well-known characters were bleed-

ing him right and left. The general verdict was that the quicker he was rid of his money the better. The railroad station was to be enlarged, surveyors were surveying out more lots, and real estate was beginning to be active.

About half-past nine I returned to the tent I had learned to regard as almost my own, and found a crowd gathered round it. Investigation proved that Old Neil was being put to bed.

"Lie down there, —— —— you, or I will split your head open," said one.

"Here, give him this," said the Colonel, as he poured out half a glass of neat whiskey and handed it to his guest, "this will put him to sleep."

A great deal of whiskey and patience were needed to get Neil to stay in the tent, but, finally, success was attained, though he continued to mumble and splutter. I inquired why they had put him in my tent.

"It ain't your tent," was the retort, "it's anybody's tent, and we just had to put Neil somewhere. He's a fine old fellow and it would never do to let him wander loose to-night. He might wander into the lake or fall down a prospect hole."

"D—— decent old fellow," seconded the "Cap."

There was nothing for it, so I went to the tent and took out my roll of blankets, and asked the privilege of spreading them in a neighboring tent, which was freely given, and I was soon asleep.

Early next morning a party of five set out from the camp of the "Sourdoughs" and started down the railway track. Six miles southerly they walked, and

the several bottles of whiskey they had about them were soon called upon to stave off their weariness.

Visions of a great fortune ran through the minds of the four, and in each it had its own particular joys. An automobile and a palace, such as he had constructed ethereally when he had previously found himself a millionaire, were again in the mental vision of the debonnaire Richard. The Colonel knew of a ranch he would be happy with in Wyoming. Teddy thought he would go back to Nome and play the biggest faro game ever seen in that pocket edition of Hades, while the Cap thought he would get in touch with a company of militia whom he could take to Africa on the first insurrection of the Blacks.

Six miles down the track and this avenue of civilization was left, and into the primeval forest dove the treasure seekers and their shepherd. The jokes and the laughter of the party grew less and the profanity greater. The calls upon the whiskey bottles were more frequent, and perspiration with all was most profuse. To make matters worse, an abnormally warm day had resurrected some flies, and these torments of the northern forest proved no respecters of persons.

"How much of this sort of trail is there?" asked the Colonel in tones loud and strong.

"Only a couple of miles more." "Only a little bit more," was the word for two hours and a half, when the whiskey became exhausted. Finally, Old Neil called a halt and said, "Here's the place. Wait until I get a shovel I hid back here in the bush, and I'll show it to you."

There were signs of digging round, and Neil's companions thought he had covered up his find, as was natural, and that he had hidden his tools, as was also natural, and that his return would be immediate. They waited patiently some time and he did not return. They shouted—no answer. A great awakening came over them and they swore, each after his individual manner, but each with feeling.

That night, broken in spirit and with thirsts no language can describe, the "Sourdough Quartette" blew back to camp. They had been flimflammed, and all the world knew it. Neil was nowhere to be found. He had taken a short cut from where he left his victims to Latchford, and had boarded the evening train north to Haileybury.

"If I see that old brute around here again I'll break every bone in his body," said the Cap. "That old brute" was a "d—— decent old fellow" the evening before. How marvellous the change, but wherein was it developed?

It was evening of the following day when I rejoined my partner. He was sitting at the front of our tent cutting a spoon from a block of pine. The camp kettle was boiling at the fire, against which was a large pile of wood. The late papers I brought were almost as thankfully received by my friend as was the hot stew of partridge and rabbit by me.

I told Pard of the experience of the "Sourdoughs." He was smoking now and gazing into the fire: "Yes," he said, "that's a very old game and appears along different lines. An Indian very often blows into one

of these northern towns with some story of a wonderful find of gold, and a party is formed to follow the savage into the wilderness, paying him good wages and feeding him up, and it takes them about a month to find out that they have been buncoed. Of course, the Indian has his month's wages and his picnic, but it is the picnic that gives him his satisfaction. You know the everlasting vacuum the Indian has inside of him. I mind three outfits of us was camped near a reservation eating up our grub and hunting round just killing time, and we tried to see if we could fill a Siwash to overflowing point, but it was no use. The savage's name was 'Jim'—just 'Jim'—and he used to come round our camps expecting to be invited to dinner, and when we did ask him the amount of grub he would put out of sight was something astonishing. One day we put up a job on him, and each outfit cooked an extra lot of grub. Jim came mooching round as usual, and I was the first to ask him. 'Had dinner, Jim?' I said. 'No,' he answered. 'Sit in,' said I. We had a big plate of fried sheep containing at least two pounds, but first of all we started with soup. He swallowed six cups of this, and then he put the meat out of business. After the meat, as he had a special liking for beans and bacon, we gave him a great big dish of these, and finally we finished him off with two big plates of rice and about half a stew pail of dried apples. This we thought was about enough for three ordinary men, and we saw Jim stroll thoughtful like over to our nearest neighbors. 'Hello, Jim,' they says, 'come and have dinner.' 'All right,' says Jim, and he sat in and

started feeding his fairy features once again. They had some boiled salt pork, and they handed him a great big chunk of this, and followed it with the syrup can. Now, if there is one thing an Indian likes more than whiskey and tobacco it is salt pork and syrup. Jim made a big meal here, and thought he'd prospect the third outfit. Of course, they gave him the glad hand and asked him to eat. 'S'pose so,' says Jim, and tackled the job, while the rest of us gathered round to see what we considered the gastronomic phenomenon of the age. This will show you the liking the redskin has for the white man's grub. When you meet an Indian on the trail he always has had no grub for three days. It is never two nor four.

"But speaking of Indians taking white men to show them gold and silver and precious stones, there was a case of this in Sudbury not many years ago, and the way a fellow told me of it was this:

"An Indian of no particular name blew into town and had with him a fine sample of gold ore. Now, an Indian knocking round the settlements is not a fool, though most people think he is, and Mr. Indian just keeps them thinking. Well, it was not long before the gang got on to Mr. Indian and his ore and wanted him to show them the way. The Indian agreed if they allowed themselves to be blindfolded, so the result was that half a dozen canoes started out with all kinds of grub, and the next result was that the fellows came back without any grub, eaten up with flies, and madder than a bear when you stir him up in March. So you

see human nature is pretty much the same whether you look for it in the Indian or the white man.

"As for ore samples, learn to put absolutely no store by them. They are used to catch suckers ninety-nine times out of the hundred. In the first place, a sample tells you but very little, and with gold they are so easily salted. As for assays, what values can be got out of specimen pieces of a vein has nothing to do with what a carload of ore will run; it is the carload lot that tells the tale, and then if you are buying the mine you have got to figure pretty close how many carloads of ore just the same are in sight.

"If you put some gold dust down a hole in the rock and put the dynamite on top of it, you will find the explosion of the powder will drive the gold into the rock and make real pretty specimens. If you want to be real clever, put some chloride of gold into the dynamite you give the expert to blast out his own sample with and you'll probably fool him. The old coarse way of salting was by soaking the samples in chloride of gold solution, but this is rather stale now; however, it is wonderful how much can be done by it, and I remember meeting the fellow who signed a check for seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars as purchase price of an extension of the big Treadwell deposit on Douglas Island, Alaska. He told me he was working for wages in a broker's office in Rossland. The fellows who put up this job simply soaked the diamond drill cores in chloride solution. If you go to sample a mine, sleep with the samples tied round your neck, or they will switch them on you or salt them.

"Of course, when a mining man is paid a great big price to examine a mine, he is supposed to know enough not to let himself get salted, but there is a case reported from the Black Hills where the leading man of his day was done up. When he and his assistant went to the mine they asked for a room with a key to it, and they went down in the mine alone, broke off their samples and came up and locked them up. It was a mine which had been extensively developed, and they were over a month getting their samples, which, when they were broke, would be tied in buckskin sacks and sealed up. The time came for testing the samples, which was done by a trusted assayer, and they were all found to run nicely, not too high nor yet too low. The mine was evidently a paying one which had been mismanaged. The expert wired his advice to buy, and the deal was finally closed. Then came heavy expenditures for machinery, and the mine and plant were put in thorough repair throughout. It was not until the rock began to go through the mill that anything wrong was suspected. Some person had another key to the room where the samples were kept, and with a hypodermic syringe had injected a chloride of gold solution through the leather on the rock."

VIII.

I MADE a find one day across the swamp that lay to our east, and I told Pard about it. There was not much of a showing, I explained; in fact, there was no showing at all, but as I was picking away at a face of rock I noticed that some of the pieces broken away at a smooth face were iron stained, and soft under the knife point. The smoothness and the iron stain and the softness all indicated that they belonged to a plane along which there was a line of movement in the earth's crust, and that no matter how narrow the crack was it was a fissure, and according to the law then being accepted in camp, where you found one of those fissures there was liable to be more of them in the neighborhood. Those were my theories, and I explained them apologetically to Pard, as I knew he would not think much of my find when he saw it. Besides, I argued, I might find something on the property later and the thing be some good after all.

"Or good to sell," remarked my partner. "I mind when Rossland boomed in the fall of '95 any old thing would sell. Fellows would go out and stake two or three claims a day and sell them to the wildcatters. It makes good times for a while, but it is hard on the widows and orphans, and as they occur about every ten years it looks as if this here camp of Cobalt would be the makings

of one. It is dead sure that this here high grade of silver ore will make right good bait for sleek Johnny to carry round in his pocket when he sells Sally Ann a hundred shares in the Heart's Desire Cobalt Silver Mine for ten dollars. Sally will get her eyes on that sample, and after what she has read in the newspapers she'll loosen up.

"It is funny how these epidemics like strike the people. As a general thing if you ask a man to put a hundred dollars into a mining venture he's ready to show fight, that is, if you are not an A1 liar; but when the disease is on he'll act real gentle, and to be given a chance to lose his money seems to be just what will make him happy. With some the attraction is that if they put in a hundred or so they will be able to pull out thousands or millions by real honest mining. These fellows are usually caught by the old chestnut of the Comstock.

"The Comstock lode was, perhaps, the biggest proposition run up against in mining. It is estimated she turned six hundred million dollars, which gave 'Frisco its second boost towards being the hottest town on earth, and as for Virginia City—well, that was a kind of a home circle for the world, the flesh, and the devil, and these cherubs simply turned loose fit to bust.

"In the first place, the Comstock was discovered by some fellows hunting placer. They found a heavy dark powder in their pannings which turned out to be argentite. Of course, six hundred millions coming out of such an insignificant prospect as a few colors of gold and a spoonful of argentite has inducements for

the greenhorn, but it is the other story that fetches them generally.

"The manager of one of the mines on the Comstock started exploring round just for fun into another company's property, which was not any too prosperous. One day the drift ran into ore and Mr. Manager takes a sample and finds it runs about two hundred dollars to the ton. Well, he comes back into the drift after he gets returns and starts cussing like a fellow driving dogs, and then he picks up some of the dirt in the face and looks at it and swears some more, after which he tells the boys to take away the tools and knock out the timbers and let the d—— thing go.

"Now the Comstock was where the mining company along stock promotion lines came into life, grew and had its being, and this fellow was naturally one of the early explorers in the field. He and his pals knocked the stock of the company on whose property the find was made and then bought it in. You see the ground was bad in the Comstock, and every foot had to be timbered, so the drift in which the strike was made caved in after the timbers had been taken out and hid the find. Well, the find this fellow made was afterwards known as the Big Bonanza, and turned out thirty million dollars.

"Cayuse Jim was a character pretty well known in Rossland in early days, who could tell stories of the Comstock, of his experiences, of the fortunes he had made, and of the rich mines other fellows did him out of, better than any fellow I ever knew.

"In '96, when things got real hot in Rossland, Jim

started east after having staked a claim back of Red Mountain. He brought some ore with him, and what he couldn't see in that ore, and what it would lead up to, wasn't in Dana's mineralogy. In the first place it had platinum, gold and silver; it had iridium and all the other metals you can get a year's wages for a pennyweight of. Jim got in with a crowd of hard-headed business men, and he yarned and lied so hard that his stories, together with the newspapers, just stampeded the outfit right off, and they sent one of their number right out with Jim to have a look at his claim. When Jim arrived in Rossland again all the boys gave him the glad hand, for they caught on right off. In the music halls and the saloons it was all the same, Jim was a good fellow. After he had given his Eastern friend any eye-openers he could and run him up against the roulette wheel and one thing and another, including some liars of pretty near his own high class, who spoke in wise fashion about the countless millions the camp would produce, and that it had the Comstock skinned to death and so on, Jim took his pilgrim up to the claim. Well, you may know what the poor devil of a tenderfoot was like after he had walked three miles and climbed a thousand feet through soft snow on snowshoes, and that he was not much suited for dealing in a big game. He was shown a shaft, but could not get down it far, but believed it was sixty feet deep. The ore on the dump had come out of it and that would do for assay, so they took several pieces of rock and put them in their pockets. Then, a very necessary precaution, they examined the

stakes and found that they had Jim's name on them O. K.

"On the way home Jim switched one of the samples of rock for a piece of high grade Le Roi ore, and the other pieces he sweetened up by rubbing them over with a ten dollar gold piece. When his nibbs got his assays he found good gold values, but no iridium or other things except a little silver and mighty little copper. Of course, the fellow argues the iridium would come in with depth, and as the gold values were good the others didn't matter much, so he looked up Jim's titles and found them good, and he looked at the description of the location and he found it didn't say it was not back of Red Mountain, so he buys the claim. When he came back East he told the folks in his town of all the wonderful things he had seen, of the gambling halls and the dance halls and the mines and about the Golden Wood Pecker, the mine he had bought. Those people simply went crazy. They had Golden Wood Pecker for breakfast, dinner, and supper, and dished up between times, and they got down all their scientific books to hunt up iridium and learn all about it. They learned it was very hard and found in Tasmania and a few other places, and they learned all about Tasmania, and found it was an island where apples grow on trees, so they kind of thought nuggets must be grown on trees there also.

"They formed the company and they issued stock, and the small boys in the streets kind of opened their mouths when the President passed down the street, and as for the President, he gave a thousand dollars

to the town hospital, and of course the directors had to follow and they each gave five hundred.

"The town went plumb crazy on mining. The parson sold his cow and bought stock, and his little boy, Tommy, stole ten cents from the hired girl to get one share. It was the usual story of mortgaged houses and slow notes. Fellows even put up their life insurance, promising their wives a diamond ring or sealskin coat when the clean-up was made.

"As spring was coming round a mining engineer, fresh from college, was engaged. He knew all about iridium, and was a nice boy, too. He got moving at last along in April, after having been given a great big send-off, as if he was going to the North Pole. The bunch came to earth again when they got a wire from their mining engineer telling them that what they had bought belonged to some other fellow, and what they owned nobody wanted. This was after the new manager had spent several thousands of dollars on the property of the other fellow.

"Cayuse Jim had staked a claim near a good claim and then just swapped stakes for a day or two. After he had taken his man over the claim he returned the stakes. You see the back of Red Mountain was a pretty general description, and the way a prospector records a claim is not up to much so far as being able to tell a fellow just where a claim isn't.

"Mining is a mighty poor game for a fellow to tackle who is not on to it either in trying to take the money out of the ground or out of the public. You will find a lumberman will have a whole lot of ques-

tions to ask if you try to get him to put up the money to take out a drive of logs, and he will leave darned little to chance, but if you get him loaded with mining dope he is like a pet lamb. A man won't take any chances in a business that he knows, but he will in one he don't, and the man who has made money at anything else knows very little about mining. Let him get the fever and start reading books full of metamorphosed hot air and he thinks he knows the whole business. A miner is the easiest thing made sometimes; he's harder to find than a dead mule at other times.

"Even when the people get the mining disease badly I can't understand how they get in and buy mining stocks, for in nine cases out of ten if the mine is any good the management runs down the price of the stock, and if it ain't they run it up and unload. If a mine manager wants to he can keep on improving and opening up his mine for years and making it richer every day without paying a cent in dividends, or he can rob the mine of its best ore and pay half a dozen dividends in a year and run the price of the stock up when the inside will unload. Mine managers have been known to run long crosscut drifts where they never expected to find ore, simply to keep down profits. There are lots of tricks of this kind against which the outsider has no chance, but when the fever starts people seem to go into it, each man thinking he is smart enough to sell before the crash comes, and then they hold on, each trying to make the last cent. As they say down on Wall Street, the bulls and bears make money, but the hogs don't.

"Of course, the fellow who goes into a mining stock simply to sell out to some bigger fool and gets landed, does not deserve to have any tears spilt over him. He tries to take somebody else's money and gets fooled. It's the shell game proposition all through.

"Speaking of shell games and a fellow going after another fellow's money, I mind the case of Zacariah Wright. Zacariah was a church member back in Nova Scotia somewheres, and got it into his head to try the 'get rich quick' game as it was played in the Yukon in '98. When Zacariah landed in Dyea in April he fell in with our party and kind of got down on his knees to us to take him in tow. Well, none of us could kick much, seeing he was willing to pay his own share and a little better, though we didn't care much for his breed.

"By the first Sunday we had our outfits packed up to the Scales, a sort of stopping place on the Chilcoot Pass, and we took a lay-off. Zacariah got himself spread out on some blankets and read his Bible all morning. It was a mighty fine day, at least it appeared so to us after the dirty spell we had, and there were mighty few laying off like us, so in the afternoon Zacariah strolled off to see the other fellows work. It was a great sight was the Dyea trail in the spring of '98. All sorts of supplies were stacked up all round, and the Siwashes charged thirty cents a pound to pack over the hill. Thousands of poor devils were fighting their way over that Pass, thinking all they had to do was to get to the other side and they would

find the nuggets growing on trees or, where there were no trees, in the moss.

"The Soapy Smith gang was pretty active in the Pass just then, and of course Zacariah run up against a shell game layout right off. Here it was a fellow out in the blinding sun with a small table, three shells, a pea, and a great big stack of twenty dollar gold pieces. A strange thing about it was that the fellow playing the game was losing steady right along. Zacariah thought that the shell game was a sort of proposition in which the fellow operating always won, so he got into the bunch and began to take things in. Yes, there was no mistake, the fellow running the game was losing and handing out the gold pieces kind of sleepy like, but going on playing. Zacariah stood it for a while and then his hand went into his pocket and he got out an old purse which had carried home his wife's butter money for about thirty years back where the herring-backs come from. He undid about a yard of cord and fixings and slowly laid a twenty dollar gold piece on the table. 'Now you see it, now you don't,' called out the fellow, and he whirled round the shells and the pea till the pea disappeared, when Zacariah pointed to the one he thought it was under. Wrong for once, and the fellow made his first winning.

"Now mining stock speculation will tell you a lot of things, but nothing so much as that the great majority of people are ready to take money from the foolish and the ignorant just so soon as you can persuade them that there is no doubt but that the foolish people will

loosen up. Zacariah was fully persuaded that gambling was the Devil's game, but what he ran up against appeared to him to be a sure-thing proposition, and he argued that he might as well have one of the twenty dollar gold pieces the poor foolish fellow was giving away as the rest of the gang. You will generally find that the man who buys mining stock does so with the idea of selling out, and cares mighty little where the fellow who buys it gets off at. Now this ain't Christian, no more than it was Christian for Zacariah to try and take a hand in robbing the shell game man of his twenty dollar gold pieces, so don't lose any sleep over the man who does not make money in mining stocks."

IX.

THE prospector is such because his life bears for him a deep fascination. No philosopher has told of its magnetism, and the guardians of our youth do not discourse upon life on the frontier, putting one's life and energies into a wager against the caprice of fortune. The life history of the prospector and the miner is not one of success, but of failure. The world's last great excitement, the rush to the Yukon, has hardly yet met recompense in the output of the Klondike placers to offset the expenditure made by the fifty thousand madmen who sought the issue, while the hardships endured by those who participated and the heart aches which were the outcome of dissembled homes are marked across this page of the world's mining history. Men festering and dying of scurvy by the score was the upshot of the attempt of some eighteen hundred to negotiate the Edmonton trail, called in derision the "All Over Canada Route." Not yet is quest of relatives over to learn the whereabouts or the end of those lost in that great upheaval of society. Six weeks upon one glacier and eighteen months crossing the Alaskan coast range was the record of a party which blindly stormed the great barrier at Yakutat Bay. These are incidents almost as much as accidents of the prospector's life, yet is he made the victim of writers and would-be novelists who put him through all sorts of

contortions, both physical and moral, as they serve him to the public. His recompense is but a poor proportion to his sacrifice, yet he is to-day what he was yesterday and he ever will be. The West knew him ere it knew aught else of white men, and her early history is his.

Pard and I began work on the prospect I had taken up, and we set to work tearing away the moss and shoveling off the earth. The situation was interesting. At any moment we might find that here lay a fortune, a competency for life. We put in a shot or two and found a calcite vein with an abundance of iron stain. In some places these would constitute a favorable indication. Here we did not know; to Pard it was without precedent. The only thing to do was to go down and see what further work would do.

"When you go staking a claim in the field of matrimony," said Pard to me that evening, as the fire burned brightly and the forest was silent save for the rabbit that floundered over the dead leaves as he paid his customary nightly visit to our camp, "it won't be a case of taking up a claim and prospecting it afterwards; you've got to do your prospecting first, and when you do get a record with a crown grant and all the rest of it, you're pretty near tied to the proposition. Surface indications in this case don't go for much. They are generally salted; you've got to get behind them. The pay streak you want in a wife is her faith that you're the only thing that ever happened, and if she don't look as if she'll pan out along those lines, why you had better pass her up as not worth

wasting powder on. From what I know of them it is a good thing to give the woman you are investigating something that will jar her, kind of stir her up and quarrel, and if she cares five cents for you she'll come round. Forgiving with a woman if she's any good is like howling in a cayote; it comes natural, it's like gold settling in a sluice box, it's gravitation.

"People says a lot these days laughing at the old-fashioned wife, the clinging vine and all that rot. The clinging vine will stand the mill test of hard luck a d—— sight better than your maverick in society to-day, an ornery sort of critter who doesn't seem to have any place in the great creation, but who prefers pounding a typewriter all her life to taking a chance in life with a partner, prospecting or developing. It's the long green the girls are looking for these days, that is, most of them, and their proposition is for a fellow to go West and go through all the hardships, and when they do that and make a pile, come back and chuck it at the girl and say, 'Come on, my honeysuckle Jane; you're my lallapaloosa.' But you ask them to tackle the proposition of piling up the long green—no, sir, they're not in the game.

"Since I come back East I hear a lot of talk of the girls here, and the women saying about the boys who have got married and made their pile out West, that some of them ain't married just as well as if they had come back East and got hitched. Now, I want to say right here that these fellows when they got married out West were poor, and they told the girls that they were poor, but the girls married them and took their

chances. In most cases a woman can marry a man and make him spread himself, and boost him to any position if she handles him right; she can likewise nag at him and drive him to drink by saying the wrong thing all the time. A little snapping, snarling cur no bigger than a muskrat can drive a bear plumb crazy by keeping everlasting at his heels, and men ain't much different than bears in some things.

"I will say that a woman sometimes does get tied up with a man who ain't no good on top of earth. There was a fellow in Circle City in the old days who used to boost around in the Black Jack game and that sort of thing,—no good. He raised enough to go home and happened to be in London when the Klondike excitement broke out. He took a room in the Hotel Cecil and opened an information bureau, and charged the sparrow-legged dudes a sovereign for a five-minute interview on the Klondike and how to get there. He struck a pay streak all right, and after he had worked it out he went back in the country and did the millionaire act. There he married an innocent little girl and took her out to the Yukon. He did not get as far as Dawson before he went broke, but got stranded on the upper river. He drifted down to Dawson after a while and started in by chumming up to some of the officials. They were not long in getting wise to him, and he landed with his wife in a cabin on Bonanza Creek. Here he hung out round the roadhouses picking up any drunks lying loose and letting his wife starve. You should have seen the look on old Long Nose Cameron the day the little woman came in with

two bits to buy fifteen cents' worth of sugar. You know what prices were on the Creeks those days, beans fifty cents a pound and sugar seventy-five. Old Long Nose kind of gulped when this proposition struck him, and he was a mighty long time getting the beans and sugar. I guess he must have blown that long proboscis of his about ten times, but he did a lot of thinking. Cameron had seen mighty few women in the last ten years, and anyway this style of woman with her nice pleasant way was new to him, and took him a long time to get her located. He sent her away with a big bag of sugar and another of beans. After that she used to drop into Cameron's pretty often and used to talk a lot about the weather and how pretty the flowers were she found on the side hills. Then she used to speak so nicely of Mr. Seymore, as she called the no-good specimen she was hitched up with. Old Long Nose used to swear by the yard when she would go. We all got interested in her, and as money was pretty free with us, we told Cameron to give her good measure and any presents he could induce her to take, and so she managed to live. I mind one day she called Cameron Mr. Long Nose. Cameron had to swear ten minutes on end when she went away, and it was a long time before we quit calling him Mr. Long Nose.

"It took that woman a mighty long time to realize that her partner in life was not high grade, and I think her folks must have got onto it finally and sent for her.

"Now, the majority of people will tell you that that woman was foolish and not up-to-date, and the girls

would say not any for them and all the rest of it, but there is something real pretty in seeing a woman stand by her husband and never see his faults, at least that's the way it struck us fellows on the Creeks. Perhaps it was with us who hadn't set eyes on a respectable woman, not to say a top-notcher like this one was, more than a few times, like the missionary's wife, for years back that we was a little soft-hearted. Anyway it shows there are some things besides money in the world, and the man that marries one of these women has a treasure, and the woman is happier provided the man is all right. But I suppose the girls have to look out for the sort of gent I have just been talking about and they get wised up too much. I guess the woman problem is too much for me, and I won't go hunting a pay streak on Cupid Creek for a while yet.

"Woman's good qualities is like free gold in white quartz, the values come in bunches. Just when you least expect it you drop onto a nugget of the real stuff.

" 'Hyena Jane' was a strange woman, and as for making her out, Forty Mile quit just about as soon as it begun. Even after we buried her with a plate of gold on her coffin that would buy a good-sized ranch down east, and on which we put her name right, 'Jane Brophy, wife of Jim Singleton, age unknown, died to save her husband, Porcupine River, Yukon, 1894,' we none of us knew just where we could go east and dig up another like her.

"Jack Brophy was one of the boys in early days on the Forty Mile and went to the outside one year, and

when he came back he brought his sister with him. A great big skookum fellow was Jack, who mined around the diggings and had nothing much to say to anybody. Jack was always frightened of women, and we never ran up against the reason till Hyena Jane came along. One day Jack was cleaning some gold dust at the table and said 'Dam!' because he spilt a little, and Jane said, 'Jack!' which made him jump so much he spilt the whole business. I believe Jane was the only thing Jack was frightened of on top of earth. It appears Jane brought him up in the East and made life hot for him at home, so he started West and kept on going till he hit Alaska.

"When news got round among the boys that Jack Brophy had brought a sister into camp, Forty Mile nearly bust itself. There was not a fellow in the whole camp who did not have a beard but shaved himself, and many of those who had beards got rid of them before twenty-four hours. Jack had any number of fellows call at his cabin to say 'How do?' and ask for news of the outside, but none of them got a squint of Jane. The boys was mighty interested, for outside the sensation of having an unmarried and respectable woman in camp, it was a dead sure thing she had come there to get married, for if not what was she there for?

"Shorty McRae got Jack located out on his claim and then made a dive for his cabin. He knocked, and Jane came to the door. 'No Jack or Mr. Brophy ain't in,' said Jane. 'What do you want him for?' Shorty did not know and said so, and went down the hill talking to himself.

"Shorty's sizing up of Jane was very funny. 'Ed,' says he to me, confidential like, 'she's a whirlwind. She stuck her head out of that door like a groundhog that you chase into a hole among the rocks and he finds it ain't big enough, and she's just about as mad. Her features are about the cut of the map of Alaska, and her voice is like a malamoot with the stomach ache.'

"When the boys got to know her better, and had all talked her over, they were just as sure she had come up here to get married, but that it was not a question who would marry her, but who she would marry. Of course, the boys got to dropping round to Jack's cabin of evenings, particularly when winter came round. You see a fellow who lives away from women a whole lot kind of gets a hankering to see a bit of their fixings, the fluffy things they stick round the walls and the way they rig things up. It makes fellows see the old folks at home and that sort of thing through their tobacco smoke. It's like going to church.

"One or two of the boys tackled the job of courting Jane, and after a while the fever took all round. Fellows stopped saying she was old and hatchet-faced and all that sort of thing, and the company sold a lot of fancy toggery they thought they would have to slough off on the Indians.

"Jane laughed one night, and it was Shorty McRae who called her Hyena Jane. Shorty was sorry after he done it, and many of the other fellows tried to quit after they begun, but it was no use, the name just naturally stuck. It was the only time Jane was ever

known to laugh, and she laughed because Hans, a crazy Swede, called to see her with his face all painted up by the dye out of a red blanket. Two or three of the boys, including Shorty, had called in and were sitting round on boxes smoking when Hans walked in and set down. Soon after Jane caught onto him and his cheeks and she laughed.

Things naturally evoluted till Jane began to take Jim Singleton to herself. Jim hardly knew where he was at when he found Jane's good feelings come his way. He was a shy, mild-mannered little fellow, who kept the boys guessing how he had got together enough pluck to try conclusions in the Alaska diggings; however, he didn't drink nor blow his money in the dance halls, and I guess that's what attracted Jane. Anyway he had quite a little dust put by.

"Jane and he were married by the missionary and started in to live happy ever afterwards. The fall they were married a fellow came down the Porcupine with the story of great diggings on the bars of its head waters, and a lot of the boys lit out for there the following spring. It was no fun tackling the trip, and we all knew it, but Jane would take it in, so she and Jim started along.

"We struck the diggings all right, but did not find them up to much—they were pockety. We intended to follow them up again next year, and figured on wintering at Circle and coming back the following season. Coming down the river Jim and Jane ran in with some moose and killed four. Now this meat would bring money in Circle, besides help over the winter a whole

lot, so Jane made up her mind to take it along. They made a raft for the meat, and Jim took this, while Jane came along in the boat. The last rapid on the Porcupine is spread over a whole lot of territory, with one deep channel next the right bank, and the river bottom from that to the left bank all dancing with white water, with here and there a rock sticking up and extending cornerwise down the river. Now, Jane got through all right by keeping in the deep water, but Jim was out in the middle of the stream, and before he knew where he was at, he was coming straight for a great big rock. Of course, he tried to keep to the left of it instead of allowing the current to help him pull across the face of it into the deep water, with the consequence he run right up against it, and the raft slid half up on the rock and hung there. I never saw it different but that when a fellow who ain't up to much in river work sees himself swinging across in front of a rock with the water all white around it that he tries to fight the current instead of making it help him, with the consequence that he runs plumb into the trouble and goes to smash. Well, this was the way with poor Jim; he was stranded in the middle of the rapids.

"When Jane looked back and saw the trouble Jim was in she ran her boat into the river bank and walked back along the bank a couple of miles to flag the rest of us who were coming down behind. She caught us just above the rapid, and we all landed, and then walked down the river till we got opposite to poor Jim. He was in a bad fix all right, and the only thing to be

done was to take one of the small boats back up stream and follow the current down so as to pass Jim and have him jump aboard. We told Jane this, and she said that was her idea too, and as each of us was figuring to say we'd do the job, Jane speaks up. 'Boys,' says she, 'it was me who married Jim and took him up this here river and got him into this trouble, and I am going after him.' Of course, we each of us said we would tackle the job. We just had to say so; we knew the chances we were taking, but we couldn't let a woman do it.

"'Boys,' says she, 'I'm going to save my Jim. I married Jim, and I've got him to thinking along my lines, and we've always lived together real happy. He come on this trip because I asked him to, and I came here because I wanted to get together enough dust to buy a ranch down East and take him out there and lead a Christian life. Now, boys, if I pass in my checks in this proposition and you get my body, take it back to Circle or Forty Mile and give it a Christian burial. I think I can make out as well as any of you fellows can, pretty near as good anyway, and I don't want nobody dying to fix my mistakes. I should have taken that raft through the rapid myself; Jim never could read water.'

"A man never does argue much when he is given a chance of not drowning himself, and we naturally let Jane have her own way. We pulled one of our boats about a mile up stream, and Jane got into it. 'Boys,' she said, as she pushed off, 'if it comes to burying me, don't make no obituaries to Hyena Jane. I ain't no

hyena.' This was the first time we ever knew she caught onto our calling her Hyena Jane.

"She stood up in the boat and poled it out into the river pretty well over to the left side, and then let herself drift a bit to watch the set of the current. She soon got on the line she wanted, and then came into the white water. The boat began heaving a bit, but there she stood balancing herself with her pole and keeping the boat's head straight. We saw her making signals to Jim, pointing to the bow of the boat, and then the water got real wild. She swung down alongside Jim, who made as if to jump and then hesitated a bit. He jumped at last,—into the stern. The boat swung round and struck broadside on another rock. Jane swung her pole into the water trying to push the boat off the rock. Her pole must have been on a slippery boulder, for we saw it did not break as she put her weight on it, but all of a sudden it went from under her and she flopped into the water. The boat swung round and slid down into deep water, Jim kneeling in the bottom and with a hand on each side of the boat bobbing his head up like a pet chipmunk looking for nuts. Poor Jim! he felt awful bad afterwards. It took us some time to find Jane, but we made out at last, and we got the missionary to say service over her."

X.

We began to sink a shaft on my claim 5 x 7 feet. This necessitated powder and drills, and several trips were made to town.

"A 5 x 7 shaft is best to put down on a prospect, especially in such rock as this," said Pard. He was a pretty hammersman, and he struck the drill while I turned it. While we were at dinner he talked, and his subject was shafts.

"A couple of prospectors working out in the hills can get a shaft down over a hundred feet with nothing but a hand windlass, but when city fellows have charge of a prospect the first thing they must do is to clap machinery on the property and spend a whole lot of money before they know what they've got. This is one of the reasons why so much money is lost in mining.

"It was on a prospect on Red Mountain, back of Rossland, that one of the pluckiest things I ever heard of a fellow doing was done. Jack Bailey and his partner had got a hole down fifty feet. One day Jack was working on the windlass with his partner in the hole. When the bucket was half way up the shaft one trip the handle broke and the bucket went plunging down on top of the fellow underneath. Jack did not stop to holler, but he jammed his fist into the cogs, and after they had chewed up his arm pretty near to the

elbow they clogged, and the bucket swung eight feet from the bottom of the hole and his partner's life was saved. This was bravery. A fellow may run into a burning building to save another and run mighty big risks, but there are generally chances of his getting clear away. When a fellow starts to feeding his fingers into cog wheels as a butcher does meat into a sausage mill, there is no chance about it. On the other hand, a fellow may run the longest kind of chances and never appreciate them until it is over.

"I mind a ticklish jack-pot I got into in Alaska once, in the Porcupine country. Not the Porcupine that runs into the Yukon near Circle City, but Porcupine in the Alaska coast range, near Skaguay, the creek that so much racket was kicked up over in the Alaska Boundary question between the Old Country and the United States.

"Porcupine Creek heads in some glaciers away up in the mountains, and runs north into a branch of the Chilkat River called the Klehini. Porcupine Creek had a little gold, not much, just a mighty good proposition to lose money on. About four miles from its mouth McKinley Creek runs into the Porcupine from the east, and where they join each is in a box canyon with mighty steep sides. McKinley had the worst, and it was here I got into trouble.

"I had been camped at Porcupine City some time when one day I started up Porcupine Creek intending to see some fellows I knew on McKinley. The trail was well marked on Porcupine, though the snow was soft and wet, it being springtime, and I had no trouble

in seeing where the McKinley Creek trail broke away from the main Porcupine Creek trail. It led up through a draw made by the falling away of the wall of the canyon on the left, but it was nothing more than a hard climb till I got on the hog's back between the two canyons, several hundred feet up. Here the trail struck eastwards and down the hill a little till it came to the McKinley canyon. I followed this trail to this point, and here it seemed to end. There was some lumber piled there, and signs of camp-fires, etc., but the trail seemed to drop right down into the canyon. The ground was bare near the edge, and the earth was already thawed and bore unmistakable signs of having been travelled over. It was sure no place that a fellow would pick to try and get down the canyon unless all the others near by were worse, but I reckoned that if others could travel it so could I. I caught hold of an alder and swung myself down over the cliff. For the first twenty feet it was easy enough and was well trodden, but after that the wall stood pretty near on end and footmarks quit. It was a case of lowering a fellow's self by the alders, and I started in. Alders grow all through the mountains in that country, and their roots seem to work away down in the cracks in the slates, which generally stand on end. Anyway, they glue on to the mountain side good and strong, and can be depended on to hold a man's weight at any time.

"I had not got fifty feet down when I began to realize that I was up against a hard proposition. The wall of the canyon was now right up and down. I realized this pretty quick when a bunch of broken

slate and moss I was standing on suddenly came from under me, and I swung out over the canyon, holding on to a bundle of alder twigs and figuring what sort of a mess I would be in at the bottom of the ravine if they should pull out. I scrambled back on to another point of rock and kicked the soft slate away till I got foothold and managed to get my left hand on another alder bush before I let go of the other with my right.

"When I got down to within forty feet of the bottom I found things ahead still worse, and I would have hollered to the fellows I now saw working in the river bottom to keep an eye on me in case I should fall, but I couldn't make them hear on account of the roar of the creek. I finally got out of that after running some desperate chances by working sideways without a handhold till I struck a place where I could get down. I went up to one of the fellows and yelled in his ear, 'You fellows don't want any rubber-necks around here if that's all the trail you have for them to get to you.' 'Good Lord,' says the fellow, 'you didn't climb down there, did you? Why, we lower lumber down there by a rope, and picked the place because it was so steep the loads would swing clear of the bushes.'

"It was only after I got down and looked back that I realized how great the risks were I had run. But there was one fellow who I afterwards saw take bigger chances than any I took, and I'll tell you about it tonight."

We went to work again, and soon the ring of steel on steel was heard again in the forest.

It was with keen anticipation that I settled before

our camp-fire that evening, feeling that my companion would narrate a more than usually interesting story out of his apparently limitless store. Nor was I disappointed. As we reclined before the glare of the burning logs, I could see his mind was in lands far distant, and with a few generalities and a word of welcome to Wapoose, the rabbit, which was already on the scene, he began:

"There's many a strange tale can be told of the Klondike excitement, in which woman outcropped pretty strong, but what happened on McKinley Creek in the summer of 1900 has most of them skinned to death, where Alec McCutcheon and a little woman were the star performers.

"Alec was a North of Ireland lad who come to America, to the Western States, some years before, which he left for Alaska on the first outbreak of the excitement in '97. It was not till after he was dead that the fellows rightly knew what started Alec roving, and what happened to him shows up pretty well how a man can become locoed on a woman.

"Alec got into Dawson in the fall of '97 all right, and was coming back out over the Dalton trail next year when the Porcupine Creek discoveries showed up between him and civilization, and he took in the stampede and got located along with the Lewis boys on McKinley Creek, about a mile above the place where I did the monkey act in climbing down into the canyon.

"In the summer of '99 the gang did considerable mining in the creek bottom, and took out some gold,

big coarse stuff when they did get it, but on the whole nothing to write home about as for money value for the season's work.

"In 1900, early in the spring, before the snow was gone or the water got high in the creeks, they hauled in a big supply of grub and a portable sawmill by dog team, and along through the summer they set up the mill on a little creek called Cahoon Creek, which headed back to the south in two or three glaciers and flowed into McKinley Creek just up stream from their claim. It was their idea to saw lumber and build a flume to carry the water of Cahoon onto the benches of McKinley Creek, and sluice off the benches into the canyon below.

"They did all this, but the work was awful hard, for the logs they sawed into lumber and all the timber they used in setting up the mill and that sort of thing they had to haul into position themselves. They could not get horses on the job. Alec was elected manager or chief boss of the outfit, and he made a good one. As he used to say, 'The only way to boss a gang of men in Alaska is to be able to do more work than any other man on the job,' and he done it.

"Along in April, as the boys were getting in their outfit, along came a fellow with his wife, and bought in on a piece of ground just above them, and located on it, figuring to make arrangements with the boys for water to work the ground after the flume was built.

"After this new fellow and his wife blew in (Wilkinson was their name) the fellows noticed a big change in Alec, but outside of Alec the camp began to

spruce up wonderful. After the Wilkinsons got located in their camp the boys got real fond of calling round to see her of evenings and on Sundays, and some of the younger fellows among the boys, who had girls down below in California where they come from, began talking as if they would get married before they made their pile, as this little woman appeared to be as happy as any woman among the city folks.

"Well, this thing went on till on towards September, when one day the word got round that Mrs. Wilkinson was sick with an abscess of the spine, and simply had to get out of the diggings and down to the hospital at Skaguay, and then everybody began to wonder how in thunder they were to get her out. She had come up the bottom of McKinley Creek before the snow was all off, by dog-team, and round up Cahoon Creek onto the benches, but now the trail into Porcupine City was down the south side of McKinley Creek canyon and up the north side, and this was the sticker. All sorts of plans were talked of till Alec spoke up and said that he would put her across. So he told the boys his scheme, and they set about getting action on it. They took a chair and they lashed it to Alec's back, and they set the woman in it and lashed her there, and the whole outfit set out to climb down one side of that canyon and up the other.

"As Alec started over the brink some of the fellows went ahead, with the idea, I guess, that they would be able to catch Alec and the woman if they was to come with a rush; but I doubt it.

"The trail into the canyon was not as bad as when

I had my experience, not near, but it was pretty near straight up and down. Of course, it was travelled a good deal, and all the loose rocks had long ago been kicked out and the alder bushes to catch hold of had all been tested, and all this helped. One place going down Alec's feet slipped a bit, and the fellows down below braced themselves as if they expected him to avalanche down on top of them, but Alec had a good handhold and checked himself. All this time there was never a squawk out of the woman, and when they got to the bottom and crossed the little footbridge they gave her a drink of water out of the tin can the boys had stationed there, and she only smiled as she thanked them.

"The climb up the north side was the hard one, although as a general rule going up hill is easier than climbing down—that is, in dangerous places. The first little way was all right, but half way up there was a cliff so steep the boys had a rope hung from a tree above to help themselves up and down with. As it was very hard to get anything like a decent foothold on this cliff, every person realized that Alec would have to pull himself and the woman up by the strength of his arms. Now you let a man hang on a rope by his hands, and then sit a well-built chunk of a woman weighing 130 pounds or thereabouts on a chair sticking out from his shoulders, and you have a sort of a top-heavy proposition, and the man's heels are apt to go into the air and the woman the other way. But Alec got up that cliff, scrambling and kicking and scratching, and reached the bench above, where the

boys had a stretcher waiting. They unlashed the woman and laid her on the blankets, and she lay there with her eyes shut and a smile on her face for a minute, when her husband covered her up and said for the boys to go on ahead. The fellows picked her up, and she opened her eyes and caught sight of Alec. She held out her hand and said, 'Good-bye, Alec, you're a Christian,' and left him. A flush came over his face, and the cords of his neck and the veins, already standing out and throbbing, showed up stronger than ever, and he seemed to choke. He stood for a minute, walked to the canyon, and disappeared over the brink. He was found a shapeless mass on the rocks below, that is, what of him that did not splash in the creek and go down the stream.

"It just shows how a man will go to pieces when he is locoed over a woman. He can mind his business and get on in the world till a woman makes him act bughouse. That one handshake and the few words had been too much for poor Alec.

"They told the woman after she was about all right, and she was awful sorry, and after a while she let out to some of the other women in Skagway that Alec had been in love with her back in the States, but she had married the other fellow, and this had started Alec roving. Of course, when she called him by his first name the boys all knew Alec had known her in the East, and they guessed a whole lot."

My companion raised himself and kicked the end of a log whose body had been consumed in the fire. A flare of sparks rose up, and two brown ears were seen

sticking up from the brown face of Wapoose on the other side of the fire, whose great watery eyes seemed to indicate a soul burdened with wonder at the fire, while his energetically moving jaws indicated an appreciation of the crumbs of bread he was eating. Over the waters of Cross Lake floated the shouts of carefree youth and joyous manhood. How many of these now seeking fortune were here through the dictates of their hearts?

XI.

OCCASIONAL visitors to our camp brought us stories of new finds, while either of us had to go to town every few days for supplies, so we were kept supplied with news.

One day we heard that one of the most famous properties in Cobalt camp was going on the market in the shape of stock. The mine was supposed to be very rich, and was owned by two individuals who were supposed to be wealthy from the shipments of ore already made. Why should the owners desire to have the public share the profits? This I asked Pard, and that evening I was treated to his mining camp philosophy.

"When you see a mining property going to the stock market, look out; there is something wrong with it. This is always the case when the control of the mine remains in the same hands; there are times when new people want to get hold of a property and haven't enough money, and they invite the public to join in the deal. This is honest all right, but such cases are not common. Of course, I am speaking of properties that have paid their way, or are supposed to be able to pay their way from the grass roots down. When a property looks like it would pay after a lot of development work has been done and machinery has been put on the ground, why then it's all right for the owners to go to the public for the money. But to

show how crooked men will get, and what they will do when they find a property that the public believes is rich begins to pinch out, I'll tell you the case of the Lost Heir mine.

"Once upon a time a young fellow went out prospecting in a new mining camp before the general public caught on that the new finds were any good. The boy's father gave him some money and started him off. After the lad had got to work prospecting, the experts and sparrow-legged dudes generally began to drop into camp, and started in to do as is their fashion and say the camp was no good, and so the papers began knocking it. The old man, of course, kept his eye on the papers, and because some fellow who sticks M. E. after his name said that volcanic corruptions around the camp were not what they were some other places in the world, thought the camp was no good and the ore was blow-outs. Well, as the boy wanted more money the old man thought he would go in and see what was doing. He landed in camp, and the boy met him and started over the trail with the old man following. It took the old man a couple of days to limber up after he got to his son's camp, and he had no good opportunity to do much growling up to one morning before breakfast when he was mooching round near the tents, and he takes up a pick and begins scratching between the roots of a tree just to get up an appetite. He digs up some queer-looking stuff, and as the boy yells 'Breakfast' the old man slips a piece in his pocket and goes to the tent. At breakfast the old man picks a piece out of his pocket and hands it over to

the boy, who asks him mighty quick where he got it. The old man says, 'Out back of the tent,' and the boy gives a whoop and gets there mighty quick. The boy had been travelling all round the country trying to make a strike, and was living right along one of the prettiest discoveries you ever saw.

"There was great excitement, of course, and a little work showed up some very rich ore, and the credit of the outfit was made good, as they had no trouble in getting out a car of ore which brought them close onto thirty thousand dollars. This, of course, set them up in business, and the first thing the boy did was to go and get married. This got the newspapers talking, likewise the old women back East, and the fame of the Lost Heir rose very high.

"This was partly on account of its having turned out some high-class ore, but more, I think, because the boy knew enough to hold his jaw. There is always a lot of glory coming to the man who knows enough to keep what he knows to himself; this is because so few know how to do it. When a man wants to drive a stake on a pay streak he had better not let the world know it, and this is true outside mining.

"But after the first car of ore was shipped there was nothing much doing on the property, and people began wondering why the boy did not start into making himself a millionaire. When a fellow turned up around the mine he was shown a lot of rich samples in the ore house and a lot of small, narrow veins on the property, but he couldn't tell whether the veins were rich or not, but was told they were and believed

it. The fact was, there was not another car of ore in sight on the property that would pay to take out, but the friends of the owners worked themselves up to the belief there were millions in it.

"One day the news got round that the Lost Heir was going on the market at eighty cents a share, in a capital of one million shares, with one dollar par value written on them. The public now believed all the good things of the owner of the Lost Heir, and figured that he did not reckon on taking all the good things for himself, but would let humanity in general in on his good luck. The public naturally swallowed all the hundred thousand of the first issue, and hollered for more. They got them, but at one dollar and twenty-five cents per share. This was in the spring. All through the summer a couple of fellows were left on the property holding down the rich samples and making a bluff at working the property. Some of the shareholders kicked at the slowness of the management, but were told that the boy was a good fellow and so was the father.

"Towards fall the camp began to boom a bit, and other stocks were run up in price, and even Lost Heir began to move, and the stockholders began to wonder how high their stock would go if they had a decent management on their property, and they then began to kick.

"As the kicking became real vigorous, the news got round that a new outfit was buying out control of the property, and this was soon known to be true. 'Now,' says these fellows who owned the stock, 'Lost Heir will

go to ten dollars a share, since we have a directorate that will push things,' and they did,—back East.

"Several papers were subsidized, and even the most canny of them said that it was good to see that one mine was to stay in honest Canadian hands, and that O. K. Smith, President of the Electro-Plated Shoe Lace Company, was an honest man and had accepted the presidency of the Lost Heir mine. The rest of the directors were high-class church members. The patriotism of the directors was above all question. The only thing the stockholders did not consider was that the days when men thought more of their country than they did of themselves belong to ancient history, days before the refined methods of the stock exchange were known.

"The stock went up three dollars and then four dollars a share, and the public simply got up on their hind legs and hollered for more. But the directors knew they had seven hundred and fifty thousand shares, which were not worth fifty cents a share, which they had as a matter of duty like to give to the fellows that was yelling for them, and they began to pay them out. The market went down a bit and the public stood back, but up came the story that an English syndicate was to pay four dollars per share for the Lost Heir mine, and that the Lost Heir shareholders would be protected to this price. Now, you always want to be careful of what you believe in mining camps of English syndicates. There are a whole lot of fool propositions worked off on English syndicates, but there are not as many fool Englishmen in this world as mining

camp fakers would try to run the bluff there are. Anyway, there is only one worse hypocrite than the fellow who uses his religious reputation to promote stock manipulations, and that is the fellow who adds his country to his religion.

"The inside sold out and the poor old public got it all, and are now figuring which is the worst bunch of fakers, the first or second directorate of the Lost Heir. I think we will have to give the medal to the second bunch, for not only did they rob the public, but they used the public's money to do it.

"A young and energetic bank practically underwrote the greater portion of the stock of the second flotation of the Lost Heir mine, and cleaned up a quarter of a million out of the public by doing so; the manager of the bank made forty thousand dollars on the side.

"If things is handled rightly there is no pay streak like the public. If you can get some worked-out property and form a company, with the President a good fellow among the boys, president of a social club or so, who goes to church with two prayer-books right along, you can make it go. This is mining the public; all other mining is risky, mighty risky. That's what I say; never believe your mother-in-law in a mining deal.

"The second bunch of directors in the Lost Heir kept handing out dope to the newspapers as the public kept swallowing it, telling people to put their stock away in their trunks, while all the time they were getting out from under and taking the money of the

widows and orphans and all other fools who thought an honest man would be on a mining promotion."

The hideous wailings of a screech-owl rang through the forest, and our friend Wapoose gave a few apprehensive hops, but stayed within the firelight. "That's only an owl, Wapoose," remarked Pard; "it ain't the widows and orphans. You'd better get out of the clearing, Wapoose, or you will be leaving a widow and orphans behind you if you stay here after we go to bed."

We went to our fragrant bed of balsam boughs, and our earliest repose was startled by a wail like a young baby in distress. "Poor Wapoose," muttered Pard, "I might as well have shot him as have the owl get him, but a man who lives close to nature can't but help have a heart. The mining promoter is city bred."

XII.

THE man who has seen better days is a feature of frontier life, and the mining camp's population always carries a large percentage of civilization's outcastings and incompatibles. Often the transition is precipitous, a quarrel at home, one false step, or a love affair sends the product of twenty years of care and education, with cables cut and moorings cast aside, a derelict upon the sea of life. The man who, as a boy, was saved the coarse, the vulgar and lewd, often finds himself in sudden and active contact with that his reason spells as "hell," but which the devil in him yearns for as deepest treasure, obtaining nowhere as where gold and license live and revel, where nature's hoarded store is ravished by the gambler and the panderling, and won and treasured by the harlot.

The nature which demands excitement, the spirit craving stimulant, goes down before the gaming-table and the bar-room, and quits but at the grave. The dance-hall girl in stockings red and skirts of yellow is guilty of results. These, all these, are the price society must pay for gold.

In view of the wide range of my companion's experiences, it is not to be wondered at that he should have a tale of social pathos in which so many pens

have dipped. He told it on a rainy day as we crouched before our fire and dodged the drops distilled from off the spruce tree. The very dreariness of our surroundings may have induced and guided his recollections.

"There are some fellows you'll find out West, and in other places, too, for that matter, who, when they get a fellow among them who has been brought up a little different than themselves, start in to make life hell for him. Because he don't swear just as much, they think he ain't a man, or because he speaks nice and gentle like, they think he is a coward.

"I was sheep-herding once in Eastern Oregon, and in that country there are some of the orneriest cusses I guess the Lord allows to let live. Now, sheep-herding ain't a job I'm stuck on; most fellows who follow it right along go bughouse, as any fellow does who lives alone in the mountains, and the class who drop into the calling ain't held in respect among men who battle for more than three square meals a day. But I was broke, and this was the first job I could get so that I could get a dollar or two ahead and get fed up and in condition again to hit the hard trail. At the home ranch, just before I lit out with my bunch of sheep, there was a fellow came along and asked for a job. He had a lingo as if he had a pain in the chest, after the fashion of high-grade Englishmen. Well, sir, the bunch of Missourians who was on the job just started in to make things hot for that fellow, and the bosses seemed to enjoy seeing him tortured, and didn't fire him, as they were justified in doing, as he weren't

much good. The first thing they did was to ask him if he could ride, and when he said he could they give him the meanest horse in the corral. Of course, he got bucked off first crack out of the box, and Alkali Ike, or some would-be bad man, told him all serious that the horse must have got frightened, and told him to try again. Of course, he did, and, of course, he got boosted off again, at which the whole gang took to yelling. It's wonderful how much of this sort of thing a man can stand without exploding, and it's wonderful how much those fellows hated the Englishman because he was strange to their ways and wasn't quite so ignorant as they was. But there was something in his eyes that was honest, and I asked him a few questions, and his answers interested me, so I did a little thinking as how I could get that fellow out with me herding sheep. I didn't want what little brains I had in me piped out by talking to myself, or to go crazy by the blatting of the sheep, so I cultivated a hunch that there was mineral in the hills, and I went to the boss with a proposition that I would do some prospecting on the side and the Englishman would tend to the sheep, and the boss just naturally fell in with the proposition.

"When we got into the cabin in the hills and the sheep getting on to the range, Mr. Englishman and I had nothing much to do but talk. I called him 'Chappie,' and he soon fell into calling me 'Ed' without the mister.

" 'Ed,' says he to me one day after I had him talked out on England—I soon found out he was a big bug in England once—'Ed,' says he, 'it ain't no

use in you abusing those Missourians. You know those fellows thought my lingo is put on, and that when I said "I beg your pardon" instead of "How's that?" that I was letting them know I was better educated than they was. They thought that, and they did just as I would do at home with any fellow who put on side'—'side' he called it. I guess he meant any fellow who was a four-flusher. 'Those fellows ain't like you, they ain't knocked round much, and they don't know that a fellow may talk different just because it is his nature, just the same as the robins that we see out here aren't the same as the robins at home, and I felt, Ed, that I have some hard knocks coming. I got drinking a bit in London, and then came a row, and I hit the trail for this country, and I came through west as far as 'Frisco, and although I had sworn to cut out the booze for the sake of a friend, I got hitting the bottle there and went plumb broke. I told them not to send me any money. I ain't of the remittance-man kind, and I'll make my pile or stay with the game till I cross the Great Divide. I won't tell you more now, Ed, but if I ever see old England again I'll see it a rich man.'

"He was no mortal good about the place; had to be showed how to split wood. I found him one day trying to saw a block of wood down endways and an axe lying on the ground alongside of him, but when a lamb got hurted he was like a mother. He would keep on saying 'I beg your pardon' till I cussed him good and hard, friendly like of course, and then even he'd stutter before he said 'How's that?' But how that

fellow would talk. I'd get him going on the Romans and the Greeks, and he'd tell of Alexander the Great and God knows what. Then he got it into my head that the sheep-herders in the old days didn't go bug-house, but were the founders of the science of astronomy, and some of them were professors—no, philosophers, he said. As I did some hunting after minerals, he got telling me of how the rocks were formed and of the mastodons that used to live up north in Russia, which I didn't think was so until I saw the big tusks they dig up in Alaska. He had rocks and minerals down so fine I got a hunch that if he ever got into a gold excitement he would know where to locate.

"One night I was in McChesty's gambling hall in Dawson; the orchestra was playing, the music soft like a woman's voice when she's trying to win you round from being mad, and the roulette wheels were on the jump. The bar was crowded full, and the whole gang was gathering round the tables. The girls was walking round sizing up the bunch, and the air assayed a feeling that the boys would play big that night. I took a rubber round among the tables and brought up where a tall young fellow seemed to be hitting the roulette pretty hard—faro ain't never picturesque. As I looked at him something in his cut seemed familiar, and as I sized him up some more I came to the conclusion solid that it was Chappie, the sheep-herder. I slipped in back of the foot of the table to wait till he quit, and also to kind of keep an eye that all was straight. He was playing with chips —dollars for whites, tens for reds, and hundreds for

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blues—and he seemed to be placing with blues and reds mostly, stacking them round seventeen, also playing color sometimes, and columns and double 0. Luck seemed to be pretty even with him at first, but gradually got against him steady, and he began to pile his chips higher. A few fellows with smaller ideas were slipping in side bets, but as word got round that a heavy game was on, the crowd gathered in round our table, and these fellows drew off while the proprietor got at the right of the man who was running the table. Not a word was spoken by the dealer, and Chappie would just say what kind of chips he wanted as he passed over the dust, and naming the amount in the sack as was marked on it in ink. As the dealer took in the dust he would send it off by a porter to the cashier to check it off. Chappie had a small handbag under the table in which he had his dust, and on this he kept his foot while he played. As the game got bigger and bigger the hall got still and the orchestra sounded out clear. Fellows coming in at the bar saw there was something up and passed on down to the tables. Me with my back against the wall, I could see the whole crowd as well as watch Chappie. Watching him were Government officials, Mounted Police officers and bucks, Swedes, Dagoes, and college graduates.

"Chappie had been pulling out the bags of thousand-dollar size, but it was not long before I saw him get a bit red in the face as he rose up like a man will when he is lifting a big weight, and he plumped down a big fat poke, and said, 'Five thousand in blues.' The dealer handed him fifty blue chips. Five he put

on the column nearest him; five he put on a number, and ten on the red. He won the column and lost on the number and color. He made a thousand dollars and lost fifteen hundred. This is the way it went till he hauled out three of these big fat pokes and lost them, and again he stooped under the table and he brought up the whole bag. He pulled out another five thousand bag and threw the valise back under the table—it was empty. He was just handing it over to the dealer when a woman's voice sounded out,

" 'Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly.'

"He stopped a bit and raised his eyes for the first time since I went on the job, but he did not see me, nor did he seem to see anybody. His eyes looked startled, and his mind seemed far away, but he brought himself round with a jerk, and then down he planked the bag of dust on red. He was playing five thousand dollars on a single turn of the wheel.

" 'Hide me, oh, my Saviour, hide,'

sang the woman. Round spun the wheel, the ball settled into a pocket, danced out again, and finally dropped into the red. Fifty chips the dealer counted and piled against the bag of gold.

" 'Oh, receive my soul at last,'

sang the woman. 'Let it ride,' said Chappie. 'Beyond the limit,' said the dealer.

"'Cut out the limit,' said Chappie, and the dealer looked at his boss, and his boss nodded.

"The wheel spun round.

"'Still support and comfort me,'

rose from behind the crowd, and, say, that woman could sing. The ball hopped and settled in the red. The dealer counted out a hundred chips and piled with the gold.

"'With the shadow of thy wing,'

came the song. 'Let it ride,' said Chappie, and the song seemed to be troubling him more and more. Again the wheel whirled—twenty thousand dollars was at stake.

"'Grace to cover all my sin,'

sang the voice. Chappie looked up and saw nothing; his eyes were wild. The ball settled in the red. The dealer counted out two hundred chips and piled them on the red. Forty thousand dollars was the stake. Round spun the wheel, and in the opposite direction sped the ball.

"'Make and keep me pure within,'

was the song, and still the ball sped.

"'Thou of life the fountain art,'

and the ball began to bounce.

"'Freely let me take of thee.'

The ball settled into a pocket, but was whirling so fast no one could see. 'Black,' said the dealer. 'Stand back there, gentlemen,' said the proprietor, 'and give the gentleman playing plenty of room.' Chappie had lost his forty thousand.

"'Rise to all eternity.'

"A general hum went up through the crowd as the dealer began to pile the chips back where they belonged. Chappie's eyes were wild and staggering, but lit up as he recognized me. Out went his hand like a shot, and I grabbed it. 'Come, let's get out of this,' says he; 'come and have a drink. I need one after that game.' The dealer threw a couple of blue chips on the table, but he went without touching them.

"Chappie went into a curtained room, and pressed a button. Scotch and soda he ordered, and I did the same. The drinks were brought and he paid about the last two dollars he had for them.

"'And now, Ed,' says he, 'I'll tell you my history, or all that's worth telling, since we parted. I drifted in here in '97, and I was one of the d—— fools that staked French Hill. I got my record all right before the grafters, though the hill was rich, and to-day sold it for thirty thousand dollars, which is exactly the amount I lost here to-night. After signing the papers and taking over the dust, I was walking home to my cabin to cook supper, and I dropped in here to have a drink. Not that I drink any now. I soon saw it meant hell for me if I started in here. As I walked up to the bar that girl you heard singing asked me to

buy her a drink. I did so, and then she asked me to take her to supper. I did so. Ed, there's something about that woman I can't make out. Ed,' says he, and his eyes shone out queer in the darkness of our corner, 'that woman reminds me of the woman I loved, and for whose sake I came to this country to show myself a man. All the time we was at supper I kept gazing at her, and her voice is very much like my sweetheart's, but coarser and filled with slang and rough talk. Anyway, I got to talking to her, and let her know I had just got thirty thousand dollars for my claim. "What's the good of that?" says she; "that won't buy your wife a dozen decent dresses in England." "Do you know England?" I asked. "No," says she; "but I've heard of it, and," says she, "if I was you I'd take that dust you have and hit up the roulette and make a winning." After supper I went back into the saloon, and I guess you know what happened. When that woman began to sing I went plumb to pieces. "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"—say, Ed, you don't hear much of religion nor hymns in these parts, but that was my mother's favorite hymn, and I used to get my sweetheart to sing it, and, Ed, you who have never loved a woman can't understand the feeling that filled my soul when I heard that song sung by my sweetheart in good old England, and then, to-night, this beast of a woman, so like my sweetheart, in tone so like hers. And oh, Ed, the mockery of it all. The whole business seems an invention of the devil.'

"Then he thought he would vamoose the ranch, and asked me to go home with him. He said he felt he

needed a friend. As we went out on the street there was a row on. A sickly-faced kid was swearing at the girl that sang the song, and made a dive at her throat, but only caught her dress, and this he tore, exposing the woman's shoulder. Chappie made a dive for the kid and caught him, but the kid drove a knife between his ribs, and he went down and the kid lit out. The woman and I both bent down over him; he opened his eyes and a strange wild look came over his face, like when he heard the song while he was playing, as he looked up at the woman, and then he said, 'My God!' and closed his eyes again. The woman went back into the dance hall, and a doctor came along and we carried poor Chappie back into the saloon and dressed his wounds, and then a fellow said we could have his dog team, and a couple of us hauled him up to his cabin, where we put him to bed. He kept moaning 'My God! My God!' and sometimes he said, 'Ethel, Ethel.'

"Next day he was wild in his ravings, one time singing the song the girl sang, others calling 'Ethel,' and mixing all up with lots of swear words.

"One day the doctor told me he thought his fever would kill him, and to watch out for him getting back his senses for a short while just before he died.

"Things panned out along these lines, and one evening about seven o'clock I heard him say 'Ed,' quiet like. I went over to his bunk, and he reached out for my hand. 'Ed,' says he, 'I'm going to pass in my checks right away quick. That girl down in the dance hall was my sweetheart. I left England to

make a man out of myself, and I done it till I met her again. Thank God, Ed, I'm dying, for I never could live and know what I know now. I'm glad the kid knifed me, for he might have knifed her. My God, Ed, how I have longed for that woman in my wanderings through this country. When the sun was setting behind the mountains and the sky was filled with pink and red and gold, and the great valleys was full of purple, and it just seemed as if God was showing what He could do in the color manufacturing line, I would wish I had Ethel by my side, and now, oh God!' and then he went off again and prayed and raved and cursed until he died.

"I met the girl afterwards in a saloon up at the Forks. A red-headed fellow had just quit singing the 'Holy City,' when one of the boosters says to the girl: 'Sal, old girl, git up and show the boys what you can do in the singing line.' She sang, and she sang the song poor Chappie was struck on. What those people always sing songs out of churches* for I don't know.

"After she had finished I got round her way and asked her to have a drink. 'Yes,' she says, and then she looked at me and spotted me for Chappie's friend. She asked me if I was with Chappie when he died, and I said 'Yes.' She asked me if Chappie told me he was in love with her, and I said 'Yes.' 'You bet your life he was,' says she, talking coarse in a way Chappie never did, and I guess she didn't once too, 'but I never cared for him. I fell in love with another

*It is a peculiar fact that the gambling and dance halls show a great preference for sacred and classical music.

guy, and we hiked for the States. He was no good, but I was stuck on him bad. One night he brought another woman home, and I had been drinking myself. I went clean bughouse, and I picked up a revolver and pumped lead into both of them, and I kept on going until I landed here. I know you won't squeal on me; you don't look as if you was born yesterday. Poor Chappie, wouldn't it make you laugh, him trying to make himself worthy of me, and me what I am. I sang that song the night he played; I knew it would rattle him—and then he died for me! He knew me when he saw a scar on my shoulder I got in a fall off a horse in England.'

"I left her. She was more than I could stand when I thought of poor Chappie. He was a thoroughbred, was Chappie."

Pard stood up, and so did I. We were wet and cold, and the only thing to do was to cook dinner, which we set about doing. My companion's story stayed with me, and in fancy my mind travelled across the great Canadian wastes to the Klondike capital. How great the distance, and how great the possibilities!

XIII.

MINING is not a science; it is doubtful if it can be called an art. The science of geology and the science of mineralogy applied to mining do not remove us far from "what is—is, and why it is we know not." Mining is an industry attractive to the imagination and engaging in practice. It appeals to the vulgar mind as the gaining of something for nothing, the looting of nature's store without penalty, and acquisition without disbursement bears ever a magnet for humanity, to which the bargain counter is an illustration in our femininity.

The methods and the modes of the miner of to-day are not pictured in the popular mind, further than a hole in the ground is called a shaft and dynamite is used to break the rock in place of heating it and throwing water upon it, as was practised by the ancients.

While mining is not a science, there are rules which govern it, and these are even as the rules of nature—they cannot be broken with impunity.

Pard's ideas of methods were well defined, but the ways and means practised in Cobalt were not his.

One day we took a trip to town by a route that took us over a number of the camp's leading mines. On every vein there was a derrick, and the ore was mined by open cut. The practice of using a derrick

and the open cut mining were not Western methods, and my companion made complaint:

"These people," said he, "are robbing the veins of their surface ore. Of course, this takes out money quickly, but when they reach their limit along these lines they'll have to sink shafts and run levels according to custom. There is only one way to buy a mine, and that is to pay only for what ore is in sight, with future developments for profits. In a stock proposition the capital stock should always be in sight, and development work should be kept so far ahead of mining as to assure this. When stock is held giving a mine a value beyond its ore in sight, the man who buys it is running big chances, and it is overlooking these here rules that has got mining its bad reputation."

On the trails and in the byways we met all sorts and conditions of men. The dry goods clerk and the farmer were equally keen in the hunt with the river driver and the lumberman. The men of Western mining fields cursed the mining laws and grumbled at customs which, to them, were new and strange. Pervading all was the ever-present thirst for wealth. We met an old man assiduously cracking away at the boulders of glacial drift lying against a side hill. His industry was genuine, and as the rock he was examining was altogether foreign to the district, and its parent mass was in the great unknown, I, lacking the experience of my companion, said: "These rocks have travelled here with the glaciers from hundreds of miles up north; there is no use hunting mineral in

them." The old man looked up. His hair was streaked with grey, his face was wrinkled and bore the marks of a life that knew only hard work and the honesty such engenders. Then a light came in them that spoke suspicion. "You fellows want to get my place; these here rocks came over that hill, and if I find mineral here I'll find it on that hill" (pointing his finger up the side hill); "you can't tell me nothink about it." His nationality was English, which would discourage argument further, so we sat and listened to his ideas of geology, which were wonderful.

"It's always well to leave those old duffers alone. You can never tell them anything," remarked Pard, as we walked on.

A little farther we came to a couple of fellows lying under a tree in indulgent irresponsibility. They were near a spring of water, and we stopped to drink. They were rolling cigarettes, and asked us to take one each, more by way of entering into conversation than by the promptings of generosity. A man of money down below had paid them to come to Cobalt and find a mine, but they could not find a mine, so were enjoying the fine weather.

"Picnic prospectors," said Pard; "I've seen lots of them. Out West there are fellows who follow up all the excitements and get fellows to outfit them in grub and give them a little money to go out and take up claims on shares, and they camp near a good fishing or shooting ground and have a picnic. When they get one camp played out they hunt another. It seems the natives around here are getting onto the game pretty quick."

The conversation drifted to miners and their work. The winning of the economic minerals from their parent lodes, the mining industry, is but vaguely pictured in the minds of the great world that enjoys them, while the men who work the winning are practically unknown to civilization's great masses. In the great caverns at uncanny depth which pierce the earth's crust in the larger mining fields are brought together strange races and abnormal individualisms. Night and day—there is no distinction underground; winter and summer; atmospheric conditions never alter in the mines—work goes on. The gloominess, the gases evolved from the high explosives, the weirdness of the general surroundings, bear upon the natures who sweat for the enrichment of others, in some cases developing the criminal, in all cases restricting the growth of that which makes the white man. So it is in the recess and dark corner are hatched schemes and are cultivated resentments which, bred in unholy culture, outbreak in social ulcers. Dark deeds are done and resentments consummated, and the world is told of an accident. Pard talked of these.

"The fellows who show up in new mining camps, and of whom the novel-writers talk, are not miners only by halves. Their lives are made up of two periods —when they have money and when they are broke. When they have money they prospect or stampede new camps; when they are broke they work to get a stake. A prospector is a gambler; his life forces him to figure his chances and play against them; the miner

side of him is developing and taking out mineral for himself or for others. The regular miner stays in the big camp and works for day's pay, and some of them work into mighty good jobs; but when a man is drilling and blasting out dollars for other people he does a lot of thinking, and the idea that he can go out and dig up a mine for himself kind of works in and gets hold of his system, and, if he has any gambler in him at all, he is off in the hills every summer. That is why the roulette wheel and the faro table do so much business in mining camps. It's the new camps the novel fellows write about, but you never hear much about what goes on underground in a big mining camp like Butte. I heard a fellow say once that they kill a Swede or a Dago every day in a big quartz mine up in Alaska and bury him in the stopes. I guess this is rather strong, but they seem powerful careless of fellows' lives in most big camps. 'Men are cheaper than timbers' is a saying among mine managers, and it seems to work out right.

"When a lot of fellows get together underground they naturally fall to figuring as to how they can get the most money for the work they do, and how little work they can do for the money they get. This is along the lines of human nature. The mine managers and the bosses naturally figure how much work they can get done for the money they pay. This is business. The mine managers sometimes let their work out in contracts, paying so much a foot for driving tunnels, sinking shafts, and putting in raises; and sometimes five or six fellows can make a whole lot better than

wages on contract, but if they do the mine managers cut down the price for the next contract, and so the unions are generally against contract work. Some rock is a whole lot easier mined than other rock in a different part of the same mine, which is not generally recognized by the management or the foreman, so when a bunch of fellows strike real good ground in one part of the mine the fellows in other parts expect them to kill time so as not to make too good a showing. The fellows who won't kill time when they have soft ground become mighty unpopular.

"Mine foremen often play national prejudices to get men to do more work in the mines, such as putting a gang of Finlanders in one drift and a gang of Swedes in another drift, and then the foreman tells the Swedes how well the Finlanders are working, and the Finlanders how well the Swedes are working.

"There was once a gang of Dagoes working in a drift on the 700-foot level in a big mine out West. These fellows would always work fit to kill when they got good ground, and all the other fellows hated them, so when orders came that the drift on the 600-foot level just above them was to be driven further, the boys worked things so a gang of fish-eaters would be put on the job, and these fellows went at it intending to beat the Dagoes. Now, of all men who can do hard work and stay at it, a Nova Scotian about leads the world, and after they began work the Dagoes began to hear big reports of how many feet per day the fish-eaters were doing, and the Dagoes began to hustle and the fight was on. At lunch time underground and in

the bunk houses off shift, and even in the saloons down town, the fight was talked of, and the Dagoes and the fish-eaters were jollied by their friends. Not a minute was lost by either side, and both saw to it that they got the best kind of drills, but the fish-eaters began to put the Dagoes under. One night when the excitement was high one of the Dagoes was passing along under the stope to the station on the 700-foot level when a piece of rock came down and hit him on the head and killed him. Another Dago was put in his place and the work went on.

"The dead Dago was one of two brothers in the gang, and the live brother got it into his head that one of the fish-eaters had climbed down through the stope which was worked out and timbered to the 600-foot level, and had dropped the rock which killed his brother. As the fish-eaters got further and further ahead of the Dagoes, the Dagoes got hotter and hotter, and the one who had his brother killed got surer that it was the fish-eaters that killed him.

"One night the brother told the gang he was sick and left them to go on top, so he said. But he climbed into the old stope and up through to the 600-foot level. He walked along the 600-foot level towards the station at the shaft, but turned into a small abandoned crosscut which was used for keeping powder in. He was not long at work. He grabbed a couple of handfuls of dynamite sticks and laid a string of them in the ditch alongside of the crosscut. The ditch had water in it and the dynamite was hidden. He kept on till he had a string of them from the pile of dynamite to

the track. Then he took a knife and cut a stick and put a small lump on the rail of the car track in the tunnel. He rubbed a stick over with dirt so as not to shine out plainly, and leant it up against the rail with the bottom end in the water.

"The Dago's scheme panned out all right. Just at quitting time, which was in a few minutes, the Nova Scotia fellows were coming out along the tunnel, one of them pushing a car with dull tools on it. There wasn't much left of the fish-eaters, and for about a week the whole camp was figuring out what made the powder go off.

"Dynamite is a funny thing, and has earned a reputation near as bad as women; you never know what it will do. A whole box of it fell down the shaft of a mine once, 400 feet, and never went off. When the Canadian Pacific Railway was building along the north shore of Lake Superior, the old *Storm King* came into Jackfish Bay one day in the fall with a load of dynamite and horses. She had come through a bad storm, and some dynamite had broken loose and got among the horses. The deck of the steamer was plastered all over with dynamite, and the horses were tramping it in. On the Pacific coast, in the rainy season, some prospectors often use an inch off a stick of dynamite to light the fire with. It makes a big heat when it burns. I was underground in a coal mine once, and a kid was thawing dynamite at the fire used for ventilating the mine. He was throwing chunks in the fire and watching it flare up. Other times it will go off with almost nothing. It's been

known to explode by a fellow breaking a stick in two."

Here the conversation stopped. We were in Cobalt. A Western foreman was directing the erection of a portable bank building which had been brought in from Vancouver in sections. The winter was coming on and local labor was sluggish. It had never learned to hustle, and it certainly did not keep pace with its director's profanity.

XIV.

As we stayed with the claim my determination grew to hold it, and to do what work was possible before the weather became too severe to live under canvas. This being the case, we began to re-establish ourselves, and to this end purchased a new tent eight feet wide and ten feet long, with a two-foot wall. Spruce logs we cut and piled into a wall three feet high of like dimensions. Over this we set our tent, making, practically, a log cabin with a tent roof. We built our bed of poles and raised it two feet off the ground. On this we laid brush to form our bed. But our greatest comfort was a stove, a small tin one, which we mounted on stakes driven into the ground. We increased our provisions, and, as Pard expressed it, "began to live like white men."

One day it began to snow, or rather one night. In the morning as we looked out the change was great. It looked another land. Distances seemed less, and the fir trees looked half guilty as they bowed beneath their load of soft and clinging snow.

Towards noon we saw two travellers passing on a neighboring trail. We hailed them and asked them to come in and dry themselves. They did so. They said they had travelled since morning and were played out, and looked the part. It would have been

against the code had we not extended our hospitality with an invitation to dinner. We had a quantity of excellent beefsteak, and Pard filled a frying-pan. They ate as only men under such circumstances can eat. The two consisted of an engineer and a bushman, and the former was somewhat consequential. To our invitation to dine the former said he would not mind paying for a meal. We were evidently misunderstood. As he took his leave he tendered fifty cents, and this in a patronizing manner. By this time Pard was very angry, and his manner bespoke the same half-repressed. Our guests departed and he gave tongue.

"These North American Chinamen ain't accustomed to the white man's way of doing business. Offering us two bits apiece for good beefsteak out here in the bush, as if we asked them to grub to make money out of them! Besides, I wouldn't dish up that grub for a dollar a meal."

Pard's pride was sore offended, and it required the prolonged influence of tobacco to bring him round.

As the snow continued through the afternoon, to work would be a punishment, so we remained within. The further use of tobacco inspired his tongue, and his conversation began to flow.

"Most people like to have their nerves tickled by the big in nature. If they are not frightened they enjoy a thunderstorm, and there are few who don't find heavy mountains interesting. A big storm at sea, when the waves turn from blue to green and from green to white, when the wind begins to cut the top off them and send the spume a-flying, is interesting to

anybody who ain't seasick. I guess it's the natural craving that humans have for the great Manitou, and those who believe in the great Creator simply like to have surface indications of what He can do. These things are common; everybody can see mountains and storms at sea and hear the thunderstorms, but there are not so many that have seen snowslides, and I reckon a snowslide is about the biggest thing in nature to make a fellow sit up and take notice.

"A snowslide begins when something happens away up on the peaks to give her a start, and the first thing you know the whole mountain side is moving, and down comes the snow, wiping trees off the face of the earth like location posts, and piling up in the valleys hundreds of feet deep. It gives a fellow a better understanding of the law of gravitation than anything I know of, and it roars louder and louder all the time it is on the move.

"Jack Sims, a friend of mine, was hunting goats once, and a slide started above him. Jack saw it coming and thought he would get behind a couple of big fir trees, but changed his mind and ran the other way. The slide came down and cleared the trees off clean, and the goats were never seen again. Jack got out of its track altogether.

"Snowslides usually start in the spring when the snow is soft and sticky. The wind blowing over a ridge builds out a wreath, which breaks off of its own weight, and it is only a matter of time till the whole mountain side is on the move. Sometimes the frost coming out of a peak may throw off a little bit of

rock, which rolls over the snow, growing bigger and bigger all the time, and away she goes!

"One day I was hunting goats in the Kootenay country, and I got up on the ridge of a heavy range and began travelling along it. There was a deep valley on each side of the ridge, but beyond that all you could see was peaks and then more peaks. Those lying nearest were white, but those further away got on a kind of a blue tinge. The air up there was great medicine, and a fellow felt as if he could walk all day. I was keeping my eyes open for goats, but didn't see any. One place the ridge got too sharp to walk along, so I got down on the side towards the east to get past it. The snow under me began to move, and I just naturally prepared to do some tobogganing. I hadn't gone two hundred yards before I got next to the fact that I was going faster than the snow under me, and at the same time the snow ahead of me was moving, being pushed in advance. I had started a snowslide which would travel five thousand feet before it struck bottom. The thing to do was to keep working to the side of the slide, and so get out of it and not to get down. Faster and faster went the slide, and I kept stepping mighty lively to keep my snowshoes from getting caught, and working for dear life towards the left. The whole mountain was now on the roar, and the way the air was coming past my ears I knew I was travelling some. Some goats I saw were going like greased lightning—they knew what was coming. We were getting down towards the timber, and already the middle of the slide was cutting down trees, and

even where I was towards the side the speed was terrific, but I still scrambled to the left. The snow was getting packed, and all the time it kept getting harder and harder for me to keep my snowshoes on the surface. This was about the last I remember. I came round with my little dog licking my face. I dug myself out and sat down on my snowshoes to have a smoke, as a fellow will when he comes through a jack-pot like that. Then I began to feel warm all over, and the first thing I knew I threw up a lot of blood and went off again. My dog was still with me when I came round, and, although I was mighty weak, I knew I would have to get out of where I was, so I started down the track of the slide. A strip was cut clear through the timber, and the whole mass piled up in the bottom. If I hadn't got out of the main body of that slide there wouldn't have been enough left of me to bait a mouse-trap. As it was, I threw up some more blood, but managed to get to a cabin where two fellows I knew lived, and they brought me back by careful nursing."

The snowstorm continued through this night, on which occurred one of the most celebrated ore-stealing cases in Cobalt, the boldest campaign of robbery, planned on wholesale lines, and it came to pass on a property to the west of Cobalt.

A secret can live with but one, and so in secret one man planned his steal. Ore is graded first, second, and third class in sorting, and the thief in question was doing that work. High-grade ore ran on this property three thousand to four thousand dollars per ton,

which meant $1.50 to $2.00 per pound, but by the closest sorting ore can be made to go to $5.00 per pound. Near the sorting table were placed the bags in which the ore is shipped to the smelter. One day an immensely rich bunch of ore was being mined, and as the ore came in the sorter began to fill a number of bags half-full, or until they contained about 120 pounds of ore each. The upper portion of the bag was the handle by which he was to carry it. It was not long before he had seven bags so loaded and standing near their neighbors. To the casual observer they were the same as their mates.

Softly the flakes came down, quickly covering the ground, but the heavens were dark and all things were indistinct. The thief could not have had things more opportune. With a key he had made from an impression, he stealthily opened the door of the sorting house. He grabbed a bag and slipped off down the hill. Six times he made the trip, and six sacks, bearing six hundred dollars each, he had hid behind a brush pile. "About four thousand two hundred dollars," he muttered as he stumbled with the seventh bag through the now accumulating snow. His nerves had become more highly strung each minute since he first entered upon the robbery, and now as the snow-laden spruce trees would loom up suddenly through the feather-filled atmosphere the tension became extreme. A sudden noise and then an indistinct motion before him. He staggered back, which irresponsible effort threw him off balance; the newly-fallen snow was a mantle of grease on the glacier polished rock,

and down he came. His ankle was in torture, and its agony filled his frame. He writhed with the pain, and the wandering cow slowly passed on through the bushes. Finally, he controlled himself and realized he must make away with the silver. Six hundred dollars in the half-bag was too much to lose; besides, where it lay it would be seen in the morning, and an investigation would spoil all. With great patience, and greater agony, he at last got the hundred pounds on his back, and, lying flat on his stomach, he squirmed down the hill, over fallen trees and rocks, to the brush pile, where the wealth he thought was his lay hidden. He managed to hide his burden, and off he went to town. Three weeks elapsed before he could leave his bed, and Christmas came before he was around. The snow lay thick, and the work of the wood choppers had so changed the scene that this, together with the heavy mantle of white, prevented him locating the position of his store. To search would place suspicion upon him had his theft been discovered. There was nothing for him but that he give it up. It was not until the summer of 1906 had well advanced that the bags were found. Their loss had never been detected. One home that Christmas was in poverty, and the crippled head of that home dreamed of visions of silver, sacked in seven bags, being slowly mantled over by the falling snow.

The snow had gone again, as is the custom with the season's first sprinkle.

One evening shortly after, when we were returning from work, we saw a rabbit in the trail. Pard took a

shot at it and missed. We saw a partridge, and this he missed. When we got home he was in a deep mood. He had not his usual camp activity. After our meal he sat brooding, looking at the stove. Then he suggested that we go to bed early, and he asked me to turn down the blankets, and he crawled into bed. When I joined him I found him shivering.

"What's the matter, Pard?" I asked.

"I think I have an attack of fever and ague," he said; "try and go to sleep."

I lay quiet for a while, but his trembling grew excessive, and his teeth were chattering; sleep was absolutely impossible. I inquired as to his symptoms, and if he felt any pain. Yes, he had a pain in his right side. "When you draw your breath does it hurt you?" I asked. "Yes," he answered. I told him that I felt sure he had pleurisy. "No," he said, "it is only fever and ague; I have it every once in a while, ever since I got mixed up in that slide out in the mountains." I had my doubts, as his trembling grew worse and worse, and suggested that I go for a doctor. He objected for a long while, but finally said I could do as I liked. As I dressed he said: "If I should be—unconscious—when you get back—telegraph my brother, J. C. O'Neil, Coteau, Quebec. Write that address down so you won't forget it." I scrawled it on a piece of paper and went off. I started for Kerr Lake, where I would telephone the doctor in Cobalt to come and meet me at Cross Lake. The moon was shining full, and the air bracing. "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods," and as I travelled the survey line

to the old lumber trail which we used in going to Cross Lake, I wondered if the Great Mind responsible for the woods had ever conceived the northern Canadian forest.

On the road, after I had reached it, I found three Frenchmen sitting before a camp-fire. There was ample excuse for being persuasive, so I said that my partner was dying, and asked two of them to follow the survey line to our camp, while the third I induced to come with me to help with their big boat to cross the lake. To my great joy they assented, and I put the two on the track to the invalid, and set out with the third. We crossed the lake and reached the nearest mine. We knocked at the office, where the manager and clerk slept. They awoke in very bad humor, but allowed me to use the 'phone. It would not work, and continuous ringing brought no response. At the next mine there was another telephone system, and I rattled them up. This line was also out of order. There was nothing for it but to walk to Cobalt. That meant an hour and a half. I told my companion to go back to his camp, but he said that he couldn't handle the boat alone and wanted to stay where he was, but there was no room for him. The fellow was in reality frightened of the night.

It was one o'clock ere I pounded on the door of the doctor's office, drug store, and sleeping apartments, all combined. I knew him well and did not stint my language. He had had a hard day, and asked me to call for him at seven. "Seven be hanged!" said I. "Come on, the man is dying!" So out we started by

a direct trail to Cross Lake, floundering over stumps and stones and through mud and water. We reached Cross Lake, promptly commandeered the first boat at hand, and rowed down the lake to the lumber trail, and so to the tent. We arrived at three o'clock. The three Frenchmen were there; one of them with the invalid's head in his lap, the other two sitting over the fire heating stones to put at the sick man's feet. On our arrival the Frenchmen departed.

The doctor diagnosed the case as pleurisy or pneumonia; he thought more probably pneumonia. He gave him a hypodermic, which relieved his suffering. When the day broke the doctor said it was necessary to get him out of there, so we helped him to dress. We started down the survey line, negotiating the fallen trees and the pools of water as well as we could, the sick man with an arm over each of our shoulders. When we reached the road Pard took off his hat and handed it to me, asking that I get him a drink of water. I took his well-worn sombrero and went to the little brook, and, bending the rim, brought him back his drink. Then we took him down to the lake and seated him in the boat. It was now a matter of rowing four miles against the chill autumnal wind. The doctor had other responsibilities, so he landed on the west side of the lake, where the trail headed off for Cobalt, and I was left with my friend. At last, weary and worn out, we landed at the farm-house at the point now known as Argentite. Here the railway was in close proximity, and the train

would pass north to New Liskeard, where there was a hospital established, at 4.30 in the afternoon.

In the small log farm-house were residing three families of Scandinavians, yet they did not refuse hospitality to the invalid. He lay on a sofa and groaned. The senior frau gave me a breakfast of bacon and eggs (she did a restaurant business), which I sorely needed.

On leaving the stuffy farm-house, where two or three babies were incessantly crying, I met a member of the medical profession, whose reputation for kindliness was hardly second to that of his literary ability, and whose verse has described the pathos and tragedy of the northern forest in the weird philosophy of the habitant. I told him of my care, and he visited the patient. "Yes," he said, "it is pneumonia all right. There is nothing much you can do for him. Keep him stimulated and keep him quiet." Keep him quiet! The handling the poor fellow had got so far would put a modern hospital nurse in hysterics at its mention. Yet he lived, and is alive to-day, attached to a railway survey piercing the wilderness. My duty to him was ended with handing him over to the hospital authorities at New Liskeard. He afterwards wrote me:

"Coteau Ldg., Que., Nov. 29, '05.

"Dear Bill,—Your letter of Nov. 26 at hand, and contents duly noted. I am glad to hear that the claim is showing up O. K. I hope you have a mine. Well, I am getting along as well as I could expect after the shaking up I got, for I was near going over the Big Divide, and I did not have my pack ready, as

we used to say in the good old West. I was sure when you left that night that I had seen the last man that I would see on earth, but made up my mind that there was no use to whine over it. Well, I had often been in tight places before, but while I had anything like a fighting chance I did not mind it, even the time I was in the snowslide. Say, I will write you a full account of that sometime this winter, and you can fix it up if you want to and send it anywhere you like, and if you are in the habit of writing stories I can tell you some good ones about things that happened to myself, for I have sure been through the mill. Well, this is a fine fall down here. No snow yet and the weather is very fine and warm. I guess I will ring off for this time. Let me hear from you soon. I remain,

"Yours sincerely,

"E. N. O'Neil."

XV.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

THE rushing, roaring sluicehead was shut off; the men had left for divers cabins, and Long-Nose Cameron was left in full possession of the works. Long-Nose Cameron was owner of No. 20, below Discovery, Mastodon Creek, in the Circle City District, Alaska, a pioneer in that, as he had been in many other camps, and one of the best known and most venerated characters in the Yukon Valley.

The water ceased to foam and splash within the dump-box and died into a gently gurgling stream as the old man peered between the riffles, seeking the shimmering gleam of gold among the pebbles.

"Pretty darned good ground this," said he, as he poked his finger at the yellow patches which here and there appeared behind the pebbles in the riffles. "This minin's no romance, and Mastodon Creek ain't what she's cracked up to be, or else there's something wrong with them last two clean-ups I've made; but, say, she don't look so bad neither," he mumbled as he got a fairly coarse piece, worth two or three cents, between his thumb and forefinger, and rolled it round and round.

"Seems like I should have got more'n seven thousand five hundred out of the last clean-up, an' this

here dump-box don't flash too bad, seein' we've been only shovelin' in two days; maybe she'll be better; hope so, anyhow; want it bad enough to make a stake an' quit this here country and settle down on a ranch an' live like a white man."

The old man continued his muttering as he plodded towards the cabin in which he and Joe Humphrey lived as "partners." Partners they were only as regards their living together, for Joe had no interest in the title of the claim, but had come to the camp the fall before "broke," and the old man had fed him through the winter, and told him if he would care to stay on the claim during the summer and help him he would give him twenty per cent. of the profits. To this Joe had agreed.

The old man visited the creek, where hung a towel on a bush, and a piece of soap lay within a tobacco tin upon the ground. He washed and went into the cabin. Joe was engaged in cooking supper, which operation consisted of warming some beans and bacon in a frying-pan and boiling the tea water. The old man sat upon the bedquilt in one corner and pulled the prominent part of his physiognomy. "Think we're goin' to have better clean-up this time; sluices don't look too bad—wonder if Bill will get in from Circle to-day with grub. Might be possible he'll bring in some salmon; fish oughter be gettin' up the Yukon now, an' by buryin' 'em under the moss against the ice each time he camped he oughter be able to get 'em in here without bein' altogether rotten. I'm sick of this 'ere everlasting beans and bacon, an' now the fruit has

run out, gettin' darned near the citric acid stage, seems as if all Bill can find in Circle to pack in here is hootch; d—— the whiskey."

"Whiskey's pretty good thing now an' again," remarked Joe.

"Yes, pretty darned good thing to leave alone," retorted the old man. "An' I've swilled enough of it to float a ship, an' bought more of it at four bits an' a dollar a glass than cheaper."

They ate their meal in silence, and at its close the old man reached behind him, took the frying-pan off the stove, and placed it on the table in front of him. It had been filled with water to heat while they ate, and now he washed the dishes while his partner changed his clothes—in other words, "togged up."

The younger man left the cabin, and immediately the old man again opened converse with his universal confidant, himself.

" 'Spose he's goin' down to Somerville's; queer thing he can't keep clear of the place one night now an' again jest to show that he knows how. 'Spose it's the woman that does it. Well, it's the way they all go. Guess I'd better take the rifle and see what I can shoot up towards the ridge; maybe get a rabbit, not exac'ly in season, but have to get fresh meat somehow, or maybe I run into grouse."

The old man took down the rifle that hung on the wall and put a few cartridges in his pocket, left the cabin, and began to slowly ascend the hill at the back thereof. "Blamed fool I am not to have money saved, instead of blowin' it in hootch. If I'd have had a

little over after I'd bought this claim I'd have had enough to hire some feller to look after me when I was sick. Of course, the fellers around would never see me go hungry or peter out without bein' at the finish. Joe looked after me perty good when I had that touch of lumbago last winter, and then seems like I just had to let him in on the lay, although I guess I've done more for him than ever he will for me."

It was June on the borders of the Arctic Circle; the sun was still as high as it would be at three o'clock in the afternoon in the New England States. The wild flowers gave a touch of beauty to the luxuriant grasses and shrubs over which the hunter trod.

"These 'ere flowers look good to me; kinder make me homesick. People where I was raised thinks there's nothin' in this land but moss, when they thinks of it at all, which ain't often. Gosh! but them roses looks perty; seems like we'll have good crop of berries, too; wish they'd hurry up."

The old man slowly made his way towards the ridge, still muttering in disjointed sentences, and, as he switch-backed to and fro across the face of the hill, his eye caught a little "draw" in which the scrub was slightly better developed than on the hillside as a whole. He knew the draw, for from it he had secured his winter's firewood.

"Guess I'll have a look into the draw an' see what's there," he said, as he edged round the hog's back which marked its nearest limit. He soon trod upon moss, water soaked and pierced with shrubs and willows, and beneath whose surface, six or eight inches,

the soil was frozen to depths unknown. A small seepage of water came down the bottom of the draw, and every here and there pools existed in the moss. The heat of the "everlasting" sun and his exertions had made the old man thirsty, and he sought the water.

"Hullo," he said, as he came upon one of the pools alongside of which was a small pile of pebbles and bits of angular rock, "what darnation fool is prospectin' round here; seems like these chechackoes will be huntin' gold in the icebergs perty soon. But, say! this ain't no chechacko's work," the old man continued, as he squatted down beside the stone pile and caught some of the stuff betwen his fingers and rubbed it; "this here stuff's got wash in't, an' it's got grit, an' this here sharp stuff's bed-rock, or else I don't know nothin'. What the ——!" The old man picked up a small nail, much betwisted, rusty, and bent double. He turned it over and pondered deeply. "Well, I'll be darned!" he finally exclaimed; "I remembers throwin' down that nail below the sluice-box on me works; I drew it out of a piece of box I were a-nailin' on one of the sluices that was cracked, an' I tried straightenin' it till I got sick an' chucked it. Say!" he again exclaimed, as a sudden light came into his eyes; "Mastodon's all right, but there's something wrong somewheres."

Down the hill came Long-Nose Cameron, and down the trail he went to Somerville's saloon. His entrance thereto caused glances of astonishment from all present, for, while he was a very regular visitor when on a spree, when sober he cursed the place and never

went near it, and his last spree being of recent date another outbreak was unlooked-for. He came in and sat on a box in one corner, his rifle across his knees. He spoke no word, but chewed and spat profusely.

Without making the move conspicuous, the old man's chief admirer, "Big Dick" Chester, came and sat by his side.

"Well, Cameron, how are things?" inquired Dick.

"Say nothin' an' chew gum," was the codified reply.

"What's the matter?"

"Don't know."

"What have you located?"

"The only thing I've located is some hardware I chucked away on the works 'way up in the draw along with a lot of bed-rock an' wash, nothin' bigger than what'd go atween the riffles of a feller's sluices."

"Who did it?"

"Don't know."

"Guess it's a case of callin' a meetin'."

"Well, I guess that's the usual procedure."

Big Dick left his aged friend, and soon had three or four allies round him, and all spoke in undertones. Soon they were seen to separate and leave the saloon, and like wildfire the news went forth. The greatest crime upon the Yukon calendar had been committed—a sluice-box had been robbed. Men walked to and fro, smoked and chewed and spat vigorously, and worked themselves into a frenzy. There was murder in their eyes and fever in their blood—the fire that blood alone can quench. Murder, even murder in its vilest form,

could find excuse within their hearts, but he who robbed his fellow had better seek to stay the mighty Yukon's flow than seek to reason with their humor.

The saloon was empty save for the proprietor, Potlatch Kate, the dance-hall girl from Circle, and the victim. The old man sat with eyes upon the floor, spitting down a hole between the poles. The proprietor stood behind his bar gazing through the open window, and the girl was playing solitaire with a much-begrimed pack of cards.

The crowd was gathering round the door, the men talking in bunches of three or four, or walking to and fro in feverish haste, but all was still. The sun was getting low, and not a breath of wind was stirring. The cloudless sky was of the deepest blue, and the stimulating atmosphere caused the mental activity which ages men before their time and gives the strained, hard features to the Yukon pioneer.

The first words uttered above a whisper were those of old man Murphy, a hanger-on around the camp, doing odd chores and cutting wood. Murphy stood upon the doorstep of the saloon and cried:

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All ye who have business in this here miners' meetin' about to be held in this here camp of Mastodon Creek, in the United States Territory of Alaska, kin now come inside this here saloon, an' they shall be heard."

Murphy led the way and the others followed, some sitting, but most of them leaning up against the walls and bar.

"I move Dick Chester be chairman," said Murphy.

"I second that," came another voice, and Dick, after a moment's stay, made his way through the hall to the far end, and sat upon a stool which stood on a small platform rising a foot above the general floor. He coughed, rose to his feet, and coughed again.

"Boys," he said, "there's been thievin' done in this here camp, an' it's up to us to find out who did it. On this point, gentlemen, I have notions of my own, but these, in the interest of justice, I've got to keep to myself. Gentlemen, we're in this cursed country livin' on all sorts of grub, half-frozen to death in winter, with a broiling hot sun doin' business near twenty-four hours on end in the summer, to get away from what the chechacko calls civilization, but what we call the gang of thieves and robbers who go to church with two prayer-books two or three times a week an' rob the widder an' the orphan atween times. We never lock our doors in this country, gentlemen; we leave them doin's for the people who live in civilization, an' if any feller chances by our cabin we ask him in to have some supper, or if we're not at home he knows he's welcome to feed himself, only we expect him to leave his name an' his address. We do this, fellers, whether grub is worth one or two dollars a pound, but we want no thievin'. If there's one thing more unhealthy than another around Alaska diggin's it's stealin'. Yes, sir, gentlemen, we'll feed the most cultus, laziest hobo that chances by, or we won't holler if he takes a meal an' says he took it, but we won't stand for thievin'. We've got fair diggin's in this camp; wages little better maybe, but enough to get together a little stake to

look for somethin' big, which, sure as fate, gentlemen, is goin' to be found in these parts somewhere. Now, gentlemen, we've got these diggin's, but by —— we've earned them, an' what is ours is ours, an' we don't want no civilized methods of doin' business. Gentlemen, if we let this thievin' business go on the first thing we'll know is that we'll have lawyers in on us, and that will be our finish. Lawyers—hang the lawyers! What do we want with lawyers? If there's any trouble as to who owns a bit of ground, why the boys gets together as we're doin' now, an' you bet we mighty soon find out whose it is an' what's what, an' the feller who owns the ground gets it an' it don't cost him nothin'. I tell you, gentlemen, when a camp gets civilization it gets the scurvy an' ain't a fit place for a white man to live in. Now, gentlemen, we're a mighty long way from civilization here, an' the chances of our gettin' any lawyers is slight, but we've got the next worst—we've got a thief, an' the quicker we find out who he is the better."

The speaker paused for a moment, and applause from his hearers was given expression to only by their eyes. These men of toil and hardship were not given to showing the passions that surged within them, but the tightly set jaws and flashing eyes told the speaker that the ferment was at work. He continued:

"If there's one man in these here diggin's who's got no use for thieves an' lawyers, it's our friend Cameron. Gentlemen, if there's one man in these here diggin's who's always ready to share his grub pile an' give the shirt off his back to any feller that he thinks

needs it worse'n he does, it's Old Long-Nose. Gentlemen, someone's robbed Cameron's boxes, an' we just have to find out who it is.

"I said Cameron was a white man; so he is, an' not only is he a white man, but he's one of the first white men that ever tried a pan of dirt within the Yukon Valley. Through the Cassiar, the Stickeen, an' over the Teslin Divide an' down the Hootalink, he mined on Cassiar bar ten or twelve years ago. From Forty Mile to Bennet he's made two trips in summer, an' when Howard Franklin struck Franklin Gulch in '86 he wanted to be one of those fellers who went out over the ice to order grub to come up river from St. Michael's. He would have done it, too, but the boys thought he'd better stay. Gentlemen, if there's one man in these here diggin's who's got no license to be robbed it's Cameron."

The chairman then sat down. A slight shuffling was heard throughout the saloon, as many of those gathered changed their positions. There was no applause, no comment. A pause of considerable length followed, but it was finally broken by Curly Carl, the Swede, who was always striking it rich and always blowing in his money. He half stood up, and said: "I moves we hear from Cameron," and subsided. The motion was seconded, and a considerable time elapsed ere the old man made a move. He sat as if he did not hear, and then he sat up straight, gazed in front of him, and pulled his nose. Then he rose, stepped behind the box on which he sat, leaned the butt of his rifle on top of the same, and also one of his feet, and leaned his

weight upon the barrel of his rifle. His eyes were focused on nothing in the room.

"Mr. Chairman an' gen'lemen," he said, "I reckons you wants somethin' from me; well, all I kin tell you has been told. I've been robbed. Who's robbed me I do not know. How have I been robbed? Well, I guess it's by the same old way, diggin' the dirt from atween the riffles an' a-packin' it away inside their boots an' in their pockets, an' then a-throwin' more dirt into the sluices to hide their tracks. Gen'lemen, I was up the draw to-night, back of me cabin, an' alongside of a pool of water I found some bed-rock an' some wash an' sediment an' a nail I recollect havin' chucked down on the works. The man who packed that stuff up the hillside to pan did so because he stole it, an' the twisted nail says he stole it from me. 'Nother thing which says me sluices-boxes have been robbed is that they've not cleaned up as well as they should. Afore I bought in on Mastodon I panned her carefully, an' I knew I was buyin' ground worth more'n wages; besides, the runs I made last fall paid for all the strippin' I had done, an' I did a lot more strippin' than I did shovelin' in. This spring, as the boys was minin' out the pay-streak, I panned her carefully. On top of bed-rock I'd get 25 cents, a foot up in the gravel I'd get a cent and a half, an' a foot down in the bed-rock I'd get 10 cents. Gen'lemen, that's good pay. From the amount of dirt I shoveled in after cuttin' the average pannin' in two an' takin' off some here and there to allow for mistakes, I reckoned I'd get $10,000 in the first clean-up an' $12,000

in the second; but they cleaned up much less. Now, gen'lemen, when a feller averages his pans an' then cuts them in two he's perty near correct, so you must allow there's somethin' wrong about my clean-ups, even if it was not for the nail I found in the draw. Gen'lemen, I've nothing more to say."

He was about to sit down when a voice came from one of the gathered miners: "Do you figure the dirt you found up the hill would carry the dust you reckon you have lost?"

"Yes, I do," he replied; "you see, I had the boys shovel into me lead boxes a whole lot, an' then I had no riffles in, jest a board nailed inside to keep the bottoms from wearin' out, so as to carry dust an' dirt into the dump-box afore they struck the riffles. Besides this, the boys handled a lot of the dirt in barrows; jest dumped her into the box jest where the lead-boxes emptied in, an' it was jest here we got our gold when cleanin' up."

"You allays attended clean-ups?" came another question.

"Sure thing," was the brief reply.

"Did you ever see any other feller 'round the boxes when off shift?"

"Nobody 'cept Joe, here," he replied, pointing to his living companion, "an' he used to go monkeyin' round shovelin' in a bit of dirt, 'to make it harder for any feller to get at the pay,' he used to say, an' sometimes he used to be changin' the grade of the boxes; used to say he could pan a cent out of the tailin's sometimes, though I never could get more'n a few colors."

The crowd was getting warmed up, and there were fewer eyes with vacant stares among the crowd. The old man sat down, and the pause that followed soon became oppressive. The men got restless, and there began to be a general shuffling of feet, but finally relief came. Jack Joslin, a claim-owner, and a quiet man who everywhere held respect, was on his feet. The most delicate phase of the proceedings had been reached, and it required a strong man to make the next move. Even the eyes of Long-Nose Cameron were upon him as he stood his full length.

"Gentlemen and Chairman," he said, "when a man comes to Alaska diggin's no one asks him why he came or what sent him here; such things don't concern nobody, an' the laws an' customs of Alaska camps don't encourage questions that ain't called for; but most of us fellers knows the past of the rest of us. If we've gone outside a few times the others know whether we've poled up stream or floated down to Behring Sea, an' in yarnin' round generally we learned all that was necessary to know about each other. If any of us ever got the drop on the other feller an' the gun happened to go off, making life unpleasant in the States, why none of us wants to ask him if he had told the coroner at the inquest what he knew about it. If a feller's girl went back on him an' he started rovin' an' ended here, we none of us care to stay up nights tellin' how to be a lady-killer; no, sir, we mind our own business. But, gentlemen, in a case like this things is different, an' while I don't want no pedigree I think we ought to have some words from brother

Humphrey, first as to how he got here, an' second where he got the dust he's blowed in buyin' drinks for Potlatch Kate. Mr. Chairman, I move Mr. Humphrey address the meetin' on all about himself." The speaker sat down, and the figure of Joe Humphrey was seen to slowly rise, with features pale and mouth close-set.

"Chairman and gentlemen," he said at last, his eyes roving round the room, save to the eyes that were upon him; "I've never said much about myself, as I didn't think anybody cared. I came to these here diggin's down the Porkypine; crossed the Rat River Pass from McPherson."

"Whaler, or from down the Mackenzie?" inquired a voice.

The speaker hesitated for some time, and then slowly answered: "From a whaler."

"Thought so," said the questioner, half-aloud; "meanest malamoots the Lord allows to let live."

Every pair of eyes in the room was on the face of the speaker. It was not a trial by evidence, it was a test of strength which no individual save an honest man could undergo. Slowly he was seen to fade, slowly he was wilting.

"Where did you get the dust?" barked a voice.

"It was given to me—I panned it out—no, I—stole —it."

The evidence was in and sentencing was unnecessary. It seemed as if the seething humor that fired the souls of these hardened toilers of the North would burst the bonds of self-control and wreak a vengeance

quick and deadly upon the trembling culprit in their midst. Before the climax came the old man was seen to rise.

"Gen'lemen an' boys," he said, "I guess it's only me as has a license to ask the court to kinder have a little mercy on this cultus critter here. Boys, afore you act I'll tell you a little story, and maybe it will help to save a hangin'.

"In Cariboo, in early days, I was a-travellin' along one day a-prospectin' fer quartz a Siwash said he seen; not that I reckon any on a Siwash, though once in a long time they kinder make a mistake an' tell the truth. Well, boys, I was gettin' along one evenin' jest gettin' dusk, with me whole outfit on me back, an' came to a clump of timber by a creek. I was jest a-sittin' an' put me hand out to come down easy like with me pack, when I puts it right on the back of a porkypine that scuttled away into the bushes quick as he could. I swore a good deal and said many things the preacher says will sen' us to hell, but after I had relieved me feelin's kinder I made me camp. Next mornin' as I was a-cookin' breakfast I sees Mr. Porky, an' I was jest a-pickin' up me rifle to do him dirt, when I says, 'Look here, ol' Long-Nose, you ain't got no license to kill that porky; you don't need him fer grub; anyway, he ain't much good in that line; he didn't hurt you more'n was nateral.'

"I didn't kill him that time, but one afternoon near the same place, an' about a week later, as I was returnin' home with grub run out, I sprained me

ankle so bad in a bit of slide that I jest couldn't wiggle. Well, I thinks to myself, I'm up agen it this time sure enough, an' then I thinks of Mr. Porky. I had to get water anyway, an' after a while I manages to do so right at me old campin' ground. Well, it was a week afore I was fit to light out fer home, an' I tell you, gen'lemen, it was a good thing I had that porky or I never would have been able to do it.

"I have of'en thought of that since, an' last winter, when I was sick with lumbago, an' after I had read all the readin' matter you fellers could get me, an' you was mighty good, I laid hands on an old Bible an' I took to readin' it. I ain't much on religion, an' preachers an' missionaries ain't much good 'cept a long ways apart, but as I reads that Bible I came across somethin' about the forgiveness of sins. Well, gen'lemen, I read that thing over an' over, an' I lay awake thinkin' of it, an' then I'd mind of porky an' how he saved me life, an' I tells you, boys, I felt glad that I didn't get square.

"About this critter here, of course, boys, I don't want to interfere, but I would rather he wasn't hung. You see, I ain't got long to live, an' when I'm dyin' out here among these hills, so far from where I was raised, I don't want to think that I was the cause of me livin' mate's death, for it seems like to me now that if I'd not trusted him so much maybe he wouldn't 'a' stole. Jest turn him loose, boys, an' you bet he won't stay in these parts long."

The old man stood a minute as if in thought of something more to say, but finally sat down without

giving it utterance. When first he stood, eyes gleamed upon him hard and watery; they spoke the spirit of revenge that lent their lustre. As the words of the narrative fell upon their ears the interest of the listeners became absorbed, and that which makes the white man was given access to their hearts; the old man won his day, and Joseph Humphrey could go his way. The miners left the hall and proceeded to their cabins and their beds.

The time was half an hour beyond midnight. The sun was not in sight, but all the northern heavens were filled with most glorious colorings. Fleecy clouds tinged with golden hues were rampant through the sky, while the low and rolling hills were green with poplar and birch. The whole was weird and uncanny; it held the everlasting mystery of the North.

An hour had scarcely passed when slowly and with stealth a figure was seen to rise before the door which constituted the entrance to the cabin where lived the Yukon pioneer. Quickly it opened, and then was closed behind the figure of its ex-co-tenant. Entering, he began a hasty search. From the pockets of the trousers lying upon the bench he took the old man's "poke" of dust, then he reached for the rifle that hung behind the bed; he couldn't touch it. The old man muttered and began to move. "The forgiveness of sin," he mumbled; "I didn't want to see the malamoot hung—that's what he is, a dog, a low, thievin', mangy malamoot." The eyes of the thief were upon the lids of the sleeping man.

The eyelashes were seen to tremble, when the ani-

mated figure sprang for the rifle, grasped it, and stood, with the stock uplifted, over the old man. The blow was about to be struck, when the words "the forgiveness of sin" again passed from the unconscious lips. The strained muscles of the hardened villain relaxed—thoughts of the future,—memories of the past dissolved the fury of his soul, and stayed the murderous blow.

The thief watched the twitching features again regain their calm as the kindly soul once more passed into rest complete. Then he moved swiftly and silently. He grabbed the cartridge belt that hung beneath the rifle and fastened it round him; then, seizing a bag, he filled it with provisions. Leaving the cabin, he took to the hills by the draw which had seen the realization of his thefts.

There never was any search. "No use," said Big Dick; "he'll never try to go out by the Yukon; he's struck south and hopes to fall in with the Chilkats. I wouldn't like to run his chances."

A few years later, with the opening of the Klondike rush, a party of prospectors found a bundle of clothing and a few whitened bones upon a hilltop far in the Upper Yukon. Beside the bundle was a leather poke, and through the holes eaten therein came forth the gleam of yellow gold.

JEANNETTE.

Dis worl' is funnee—so is life also;
De t'ing dat make us move from day to day,
Dat tell us w'ere for stay and w'ere for go,
De Rockee Mountain or to James hee's Bay;
Or 'way up Nort' to de far Arctic Sea,
W'ere w'aler ship do jus' de same as bear
An' sleep de winter t'rough; or it may be
For stay at home an' be one farmer dere.

I of'en t'ink, as dis Nort' lan' I roam,
Of my pas' life an' w'at was make it so,
Dese manee year since I was boy at home
An' help my fadder, Baptise Martineau,
Who had good job—work on de Seigneurie
By hoe potat' an' milk de cow at night;
He had beeg house, also one large fam'lee,
An' I was beeg an' strong—de work was light.

Le Grand Seigneur had leetle girl, Jeannette,
More prettee dan de doll to her so dear;
She was good frien' for me, an' I have yet
De book she give to me at de New Year.
In summer w'en I work about de flow'r
She talk to me of de nex' worl' to come,
Of how she hope dat I would have de pow'r
For stay good man, an' not go bad like some.

One day she play about de river side,
An' I was t'ink for do as she was say,
An' t'inkin' so I no was see her slide
From off de grassee bank on which she lay
Into de sweef curren' dat draw her down
Far deeper dan de place w'ere she fell in,
An' when I look for her I know she drown,
I see de hat dat on her head had been.

De poor little Jeannette, dey foun' her dead,
Caught in a root far down de river side,
An' carry her up to her leetle bed,
W'ere bring her back to life dey tried an' tried.

But she was dead for sure de doctor say,
An' den dey sen' for get de holee Pere,
Who say nice t'ing for all as he was pray,
An' I was cry jus' like one babee dere.

"De poor leetle Jeannette, you angel sure
W'en on dis eart', an' now you gone away
For no come back; your life was jus' so pure
As de w'ite flow'r dat grow on tree in May.
An' now you are so w'ite, so col', so still,
Dat I mos' t'ink dat you was turn to stone,
But den I know dat you have clim' de hill
Dat lead to Heaven—to de Highes' T'rone."

Dey buree her, an' all de parish go
For cry an' see de hole dat she go in,
An' den dey all come home, an' me also,
Dough it was nodder life dat I begin.
De sun was not so bright after dat day,
Nor was de grass so green, so gay de flow'r,
An' I was feel it dat she gone away
Was make noonday into de darkes' hour.

I go to work some more, but she's no use,
Dere is no leetle girl for make de fun—
Or say "Bon jour, I t'ink you are one goose
For work to-day in dis hot sun."
Or run about wid her small dog, Fido,
An' chase de butterfly she no can catch—
Dere is no harm in dat, she would not go
For hurt one worm no bigger dan one match.

So prettee soon I leave it for de Wes',
For be coureur de bois for Hudson Bay,
An' travel manee mile from de Crow Nes',
Much furder nort' dan w'ere I am to-day.
An' all de place I go, w'at t'ing I do,
De angel of Jeannette watch over me,
In Kootenay gol' camp or Cariboo,
I feel it jus' de same—I'm sure it's she.

In de wil' countree nort' of Great Slave Lake
One fall for trap an' hunt alone I go,
All t'rough de winter mont', until she break
An' spring she come by meltin' of de snow.

W'en in one sweef river I loss my grub,
My blanket, an' mos' ev'reet'ing I had,
I eat de berry off de leetle shrub—
I see not'ing for shoot—my luck was bad.

An' prettee soon de night get dark an' col',
An' ice was make upon de leetle stream,
De leaf of tree was turn to bright, bright gol',
De worl' was beautiful—jus' like one dream.
But I was hungree as I never was,
My head was ache and feel up in de air,
Jus' like one drunken man—dat was because
I was so weak—I was jus' starving dere.

One night as I was sit by my fireside
I t'ink dat I mus' soon be starve an' die,
An' t'ink dat I would do de suicide
An' shoot myself on de same spot I lie;
But as I take my rifle for do so
I walk out of de wood for see de star
An' have one look on eart' before I go
For join Jeannette up in de sky so far.

An' den I see de nordern light was shine
An' wave about as dough dey was excite,
Some high, some low, some couleur 'long de line
Jus' like de rainbow—it was prettee sight.
An' as I watch I feel it dat dey had
De wish for speak to me or give a sign,
An' so I sit an' wait, for I was glad
For look ahead once more an' not behin'.

An' prettee soon I see dat it was so,
De banner join an' centre roun' spot;
Dey wave, dey curve, dey twis' it to an' fro,
Dey seem to sizzle jus' as if dey hot.
A holee light was seem to fill de lan',
An' I mos' t'ink dat it was Heaven—yet
I know it was de eart'—de sign began,
I see de sign—I see one face—Jeannette.

She smile at me, an' "Hope" she seem to say,
An' stay jus' for one secon' in de light,
An' as she smile she slowlee fade away,
I know not w'ere she go—into de night.

De light she still was runnin' here an' dere,
  But she was move more slow, widout couleur,
An' prettee soon I go—de col', col' air
  Was make me shiver—yet I t'ink of her.

An' as I go for fin' my fire again
  I hear de noise of somet'ing in de wood,
I hide me queek—I see beeg moose, an' den
  I take long aim an' fire—de shot was good;
I hit him in de shoulder—t'rough de heart,
  He gave one jump high up into de air—
An' w'en he fall he dead, and show de part
  W'ere bullet struck—I drink hees blood from dere.

One time as I was run one bad rapid
  Dat I get in before I know she dere,
De w'ite water she show w'ere rock is hid,
  An' I was no afraid of dose dat's bare;
An' as I make it good on streak of blue,
  Dat snow de water deep among de spray,
I try for make beeg turn of de canoe;
  De streak she ben' an' I mus' go dat way.

My paddle break, I rush toward de foam,
  An' t'ink for sure dat soon I mus' be drown;
An' t'ink of everee place from de ol' home
  To w'ere I t'ought my bodee would be foun';
Jus' as I strike dere come a leetle wave
  From off de rock an' cover me wid wet;
It turn canoe, I know dat I was save,
  I see in rainbow of de spray—Jeannette.

De poet feller say "It might have been"
Is saddes' word dat anee man can say;
I t'ink dey veree wrong, all t'ing God sen'
Are for de bes', as you will find some day;
An' if for bes', how can dey better be?
For you can no have better dan de bes',
Dat is sure t'ing, an' we mus' t'ink dat He
Who made dis worl' jus' put us to de tes'.

THE PROSPECTOR'S HYMN.

I.

THE cattle on a thousand hills are Thine,
The endless forest, or the lonely pine;
The mighty glacier's resistless force
Does but Thy will through all its grinding course.
The rain-drop clear, with frost its ally strange,
By Thine own laws tears from the parent range
Immensities of rock, which downward fall
To make on moving fields of ice a pall.
Then these through crystal canyons, yawning deep,
Once more reach rock against which they shall sweep,
To end in boulders, clay, and powd'ry silt,
Of which are our most fruitful valleys built.
Thy creature man—proud in Dynamic's aid
That he commands, and by the which has made
The modern engine of colossal force—
First seeks the laws that have in Thee their source.
Great though that engine be and human 'most
(The triumph of the day and of the host
Of those who worshipped at the mystic shrine,
In days gone by, in each and ev'ry clime,
Of fair Invention—and did thus gain fame,
Or martyr'd died, bequeathing scarce a name),
Though that be great, yet ill does it compare
With Thine own hand throughout this world so fair.

Instinct the atoms have, for crystals form,
And e'en the mustard seed, or grain of corn,
Of its own individuality possess'd,
Within its germ awaiteth Thy behest.

II.

'Twas but an hour ago there rose behind yon saw-tooth chain
That flings aloft its snowy peaks, ethereal heights to gain,
A deep, dark cloud, full pregnant with Electron's fiery tongue,
And waters sweet that we may drink—these Thou on earth outwrung.
And as the lightning flashed thro' space, and thunder roll'd away,
Reverberating 'cross the vale where the great mountains lay,
Methought that in its mighty tones Thy voice, O God, I found.
Pray teach me all Thy ways to tread, to hearken to its sound.
And as the storm swept by o'erhead, again shone forth the sun,
To fall aslant the ling'ring drops, its silv'ry rays unspun—
Into the many-colored bow, a token, Lord, to be
To all Thy children here below, reposing trust in Thee.
That Thou dost love the universe and all that therein is,

We have Thy word in Holy Writ—the Book of
Genesis.
And so we trust, and trust is life, the life that never
dies,
Secured to us thro' Thine own Son, in whom salvation
lies;
That Thou dost not despise Thy child, Thy mission
here fulfills
To live at peace with Thee and Thine, amidst the
eternal hills.

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